SELF
THE
Grand ENEMY
OF
Jesus Christ,
AND
Mortall Disease of MAN.
OR, A
TREATISE
Discovering
What a Heart-Plague SELF is,
With its Mischief and Danger:
Also, Special Remedies for its Cure.

By *Daniell King.*

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow me.

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The AUTHOR to the READER.

IT *is the property of a good Heart, having tasted and enjoyed that which is of Excellent use, to desire and endeavour others may have the benefit of it, as well as himself: These few Meditations about the danger and deceit of this Corruption of Self, that lyes secret in the heart, and will utterly cozen and deceive poor Souls, if it be not found out, and purged out, hath been (through the goodness of God) of some use to me; And I could wish that all the World (especially Christians) were*

engaged in the ſtudy and conſcientious ſearching into theſe things. And this is one reaſon, why I deſire they might be publiſhed, hoping that ſome fruit may be reaped, by ſome (at leaſt) to help them in their way of glorifying God. And indeed, Self-love, and Self-ſeeking, and Self-ſufficiency, being propheſied of, or foretold to be ſins of the laſt times, 2 Tim. 3. beginning: I thought it could not be unſeaſonable, but very needfull, to mind Chriſtians (and all others) that will take the pains to read this little Treatiſe, of the need they have now to look, not only about them, but within them: To ſee, if while they ſuffer in the behalf of Chriſt, as to their profeſſion; they do not lodg in their breaſts the greateſt Enemy Chriſt and their Souls have, and that is this Self; as

you

*you will find in this following Discourse. It is a sad thing for men and women, to take a great deal of pains in the way of Religion, to no purpose: as it will be sure to fall out, in case this Soul-Traytor be not discovered, and turned out of doors. And yet it lyes so close, that I fear many are hardly aware of it: And indeed, it changes into so many coulours, (*Camelion *like) and flowes out into so many streams, it is much ado to know it, and observe it, from things of a more spirituall and excellent nature: You shall hardly trade with God or Men, but it will play the cheater with you, to deceive and beguile you. Which I conceive the enlighten'd Reader will easily acknowledge, upon the considering what is said in these few lines, in this little Book.*

2. *Ano-*

2. *Another ground of my publishing it is, Because it is Innocent and harmless in it self, usefull for all sorts, hurtfull to none: It strikes against no sort of Professors, nor against any form of profession, but only at Hypocrites: And I hope no wise man will be offended at the detecting of hypocrisie, either in himself, or others. And you may observe it, that the most dangerous hypocrisie that is, lurks under the wing of Self: For what else is hypocrisie, but making fair pretences, when the heart is wanting, or goes another way?*

3. *Having had opportunity to communicate some of the things herein contained, in the hearing of some conscientious and affectionate Christians; I was earnestly desired to Communicate them, either in*

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Print or Writing, for their good, and others also.

4. *Considering it is the Duty of Christian Parents, to bring up their Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And some of them (whose hearts the Lord hath touched with his Spirit) did earnestly intreat I would leave them this* Legacy *(having little else) for their Edification, and Instruction; when I could speak to them no more. And truly I judg it may be useful, not only to them, but to their Children, (If the blessing of the Lord goes along with it) to many Generations.*

I was moved by some to Treat of Self *upon another account, (viz.) as to outwards; and display the colours of* Self-love, *and* Self-seeking, *and* Self-ends *in mens Trading, and walking*

walking in the World; seeing many, nay most men are selfish in getting, keeping, and using the things of this life; many persons not much mattering how unjustly they come by it, so they have it; nor how closely they keep it, not extending compassion to their poor Brethren and Neighbours, so Self be satisfied. I might instance in Preachers, in Lawyers, in Tradesmen, in Rich men, in Poor men, in Churches, every one looking to himself, not minding their poor Brethren: In Families, it is the cause of the neglect of relative Duties; in Professors, in Persecutors, Self *appears manifestly. What disorders, or Cruelties, or Injustice, almost, is there in Kingdomes, Churches, or Families, in Duties of Relations, neglecting them, mis-performing them? but* Self *is the ground*

of

of it, ſome Self-love, *or* Self-ends, *or* Self-ſeeking; *ſomething of* Self *is the cauſe. But to run into Particulars upon that account, would have ſwell'd the Volume beyond my intention: And beſides,* Self-ſeeking *upon theſe accounts are ſo groſs, that he that runs may read it; And the things here laid down in this Treatiſe, are ſo clear and perſpicuous, that they may be applyed to any particular, by any ſerious and conſiderate Reader; Therefore I judg what is here written, may ſuffice for the preſent. I have inſerted no Table to this little Piece, for two Reaſons; 1. Becauſe the running Title points you to the moſt conſiderable Heads handled underneath. 2. Becauſe he will have beſt ſatisfaction in it, that reads it throughout; and it, being ſo brief, may be eaſily done. Mind*

one

one thing in the last place; That though I have written this Subject, of such high concernment, without a Text of Scripture Cited, whereupon the Doctrine is founded, and out of which it is deduced; yet it is proved by many Scriptures, plain and pertinent to the purpose. And my time is precious at this season: Therefore I shall commit my poor Endeavours to the blessing of the Lord; desiring every one that finds Benefit hereby, to intreat the Lord for me, that I may not be deceived my self, with this Deceiver of Souls; but that all my intentions and actions may terminate into God and his glory. To whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Reader, thy Well-wisher in
and for the Lord,

Dan. King.

SELF, *the grand Enemy of* Jeſus Chriſt, *diſcovered.*

THE Propoſition I ſhall lay down and handle, is this;

That Chriſt and SELF *are oppoſites.* Chriſt and Self cannot be ſought together, nor loved together, nor advanced together. So much as a man ſeeks Self, ſo much he neglects Chriſt. So much as he loveth Self, ſo much he ſlights Chriſt. He that will follow Chriſt, muſt deny Self. So much as Chriſt is advanced, ſo much Self is debaſed: And ſo much as Self is advanced, ſo much Chriſt is debaſed. The ſetting up of Self, throwes down Chriſt; and the ſetting up of Chriſt throwes down Self. *Phil.* 2. 21. *All ſeek their own, not the things that are Jeſus Chriſts.* This

Text proveth clearly, That while mens own things are ſought, Jeſus Chriſts things are neglected. To the ſame effect, *Matth.* 16. 24 *Jeſus ſaid to his Diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, &c.* Mar. 8. 34. *He ſaid to the people and his Diſciples, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, &c.* Luk. 9. 23. *And he ſaid unto them all, If any man will come after me, Let him deny himſelf, and take up his Croſſe, and follow me.* Here are three of Chriſt's Servants, that teſtifie this truth from the Mouth of Truth it ſelf; and in the mouth of two or three Witneſſes every word ſhall be eſtabliſhed. See alſo what the Lord himſelf ſpeaks, *Zach.* 7. 5, 6. *When yee faſted and mourned, even thoſe 70 years, did ye at all faſt TO MEE, even TO MEE? And when ye did eat, and when yee did drink, did yee not eat for your SELVES, and drink for your SELVES?* Which place clearly proves the Lord and Self are directly oppoſite. So *Rom.* 14. 7. ſaith the Apoſtle, *None of us liveth to himſelf, and no man dieth to himſelf.* To whom

whom then do we live and die? Why to the Lord, as the next Verſe ſheweth. And *Pſal.* 50. 21. ſheweth the Antipathy between God and Self, by the Lords own reproof of the wicked, in theſe words, *Thou thoughteſt I was altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf.*

In this tract I ſhall principally apply my ſelf, to the beating down of Self; Becauſe Self-denyal is the firſt Leſſon that Chriſt teacheth his followers, as the Scriptures before cited prove.

But firſt I ſhall ſhew you ſome Grounds and Reaſons why Chriſt and Self are ſo oppoſite, and cannot be ſought together, nor ſerved together, nor cannot ſtand together, nor be loved together, that he that followes the one, muſt deny the other:

1. *Reaſ.* 1. Becauſe he that ſtandeth for Self, and ſeeketh up and maintains ſelf; cannot ſo far ſtand for Gods glory: Theſe two are contrary each to other. *Iſa.* 43. 21. *This people have I formed for my ſelf* (ſaith God) *they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.* So that a people that ſtand for

Self, and not for God; do not shew forth the praise of God. *Rom.* 14.7. *None of us liveth to himself*; but to God; that he may have his our and praise and service. And saith Christ, *John* 7.18. *He that speaks of himself, seeks his own glory: But he that seeks his glory that sent him, the same is true, &c.*

Now Gods glory must be stood for, in all things, at all times, 1 *Corin.* 10. 32. *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all* TO THE GLORY OF GOD. Therefore this Christ did rejoyce in, *John* 17.4. *I have glorified thee on the earth &c.* And saith God, *I will not give my* GLORY *to another, &c.* He hath chosen persons for his glory: *Ephes.* 1.8. *To the praise of the Glory of his Grace, &c.* And when he calls persons to sufferings, he must be glorified in that condition: 1 *Pet.* 4.16. *If any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed: but let him* GLORIFY GOD *on that behalf.*

Now for a man to seek his own glory, is to rob God of his; and stirs up Gods

wrath

wrath against him. *Act.* 12. 23. *Because* Herod *gave not God the glory, the Angell of the Lord smote him with worms, that he dyed.* And mark what *Solomon* saith, *Prov.* 25. 27. *It is not good to eat too much honey*; so for men to search their own glory, is not glory.

The second *Reason* why Christ and Self are so opposite, is, Because where Christ is followed and embraced, the sweetest part of Self must be denyed; Self-ease, self-liberty, self-pleasure, self-profit, self-life, must all be parted with, that Christ may be honoured, *Matth.* 16. 24, 25. *Then said Jesus to his Disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Crosse, and follow me: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life, for my sake, shall find it.* Now, if a man will desert Christ, forsake Christ, to save his self-ease, or self-liberty, or life; this is not self-denyall, you see by this Scripture: Therefore Christ is opposed. And self-denyal is, To get what we get for God, and keep what we keep for God,

and to lose what we lose for God: But more of this hereafter.

The Third Reason, why he that follows Christ must deny *Self*, is, Because Christ hath denyed himself for us; He sought our good in his coming into the World; he came not to seek his own things, but his Fathers Glory, and our Salvation, *Dan. 9. 26. The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself*: no, but for poor lost undone Sinners, *Phil. 2. He made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant*, &c. And he that is Christs, must walk as he hath walked, *1 Joh. 2. 6. He that saith he abides in him, ought himself so to walk as he hath walked.* Now he denyed himself,

1. In regard of his Fathers Glory; doing his Fathers Will, and not his own, *Joh. 7. 17, 18. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self: He that speaks of himself, seeks his own Glory*, &c. And saith he, *Joh. 12. 49 I have not spoken of my self, but the Father which hath*

hath ſent me, he gave me a Commandment what I ſhould ſay and what I ſhould ſpeak. So that Chriſt denyed himſelf, in reſpect of his own Will, and did the Will of his Father in all things. So muſt we, in regard of our own Wills; for Self-Will, and the Will of God, cannot ſtand together. Therefore it is ſaid, the Biſhop muſt not be ſelf-willed, *Titus* 1.7. For we are to do, and ſubmit to, the Will of God; like *Ely*, *It is the Lord, let HIM do what he will.* And *Hezekiah*, *Good is the Word of the Lord.* Therefore the falſe Teachers are ſaid to be *Self-willed*, 2 *Pet.* 2.10. And Chriſt himſelf would not be a Self-undertaker, *Joh.* 8.28. *I do nothing of my ſelf; but as my Father hath taught me I ſpeak theſe things.*

2. Chriſt denyed himſelf, in regard of his People, *Phil.* 2. *Who made himſelf of no reputation, but took upon him the form of a Servant*, &c. *And became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* And ſaith the Apoſtle, *Let the ſame Mind be in you, as was in Chriſt Jeſus.* And this is according to *Paul*'s rule elſewhere,

1 *Cor.* 10. 24, 33. *Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth*, ver. 33. *Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved.* And according to this Practice, did he act also, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. *I seek not yours, but you.*

The Fourth Reason, why *Self* must be denyed, if Christ be sought, is, Because it is an Argument of mighty Pride, not to deny Self, or to seek Self: That Man takes more upon him than Christ did; *I came not to do mine own will*, saith he, *Joh.* 6. 38. And he takes upon him above the Spirit, *Ioh.* 16. 13. *He shall not speak of himself*, saith Christ. This was the Sin of the Church of *Laodicea*; *Thou sayest thou art rich, and increased with goods, and hast need of nothing.* And this Self-conceit theweth the Soul is very poor and beggarly; *Thou knowest not that thou art poor and blind, and miserable, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. And so while the poor Creature is lifted up in Pride, Christ is dishonoured; therefore *Self* and *Christ* are opposite. The

The Fifth Reason, why Christ and Self are oppoſite, is, Becauſe Self is an Enemy to the imbracing and obeying of the Goſpel. *Act.* 26. 9. Saith *Paul, I thought verily with my* SELF, *I ought to do many things againſt the Name of* Jeſus *of* Nazareth. Therefore, ſaith the ſame Man, *Gal* 1. 16. *When it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with Fleſh and Bloud:* ſhewing the Enmity of Self to Chriſt.

The Sixth Reaſon, is, Becauſe Self is not ſufficient for any good Work, 2 *Cor.* 2. 5 *We are not ſufficient of our ſelves, to think any thing as of our Selves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* Now God would have his People full of good Works, *Tit.* 3. 8. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that they that have believed in God, be careful to maintain good Works,* Matth. 5. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good Works.* Therefore *Self* muſt not be taught but denyed.

The Seventh Reaſon why *Chriſt* and *Self* are oppoſite, is, Becauſe Self can

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contribute nothing towards Faith, nor Life, nor Salvation, *Ephes.* 2. 8. *By Grace are ye saved through Faith; and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God.* In the whole work of Salvation, from first to last, God carryeth it on; so that he may take away all occasion of Boasting. *Rom.* 3. 27. *Where is Boasting then? It is excluded. By what Law? of Works? Nay; but by the Law of Faith,* Ephes. 5. 9. *Not of Works, lest any man should boast.*

Now if Man seek Self, or have any thing from Self, that Self have any thing to do in the Work, there is some occasion of Boasting; therefore Self hath nothing to do in the Work: Self-strength, and Self-wisdom, and Self-righteousness, shall do nothing, but Christ shall do all. Therefore, 1 *Cor.* 1. 31. As it is written, *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.* And saith the Lord, by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Let not the rich man glory in his Riches, nor the wise man in his Wisdom nor the strong man in his strength: But let him that glorieth,*

rieth, glory in this, that he understands and knows me, to be a God that exercise mercy and loving kindness; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord, Jer. 9. 23, 24.

The Eighth and last Reason, why Christ and Self are opposite, is, Because the setting up of Self, admiring Self, and measuring Self by Self, is Folly, and not Wisdom, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12. saith *Paul, They measuring themselves among themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are not wise.* Now Christ is Wisdom it self; and Folly and Wisdom cannot stand together, but are directly opposite.

Now I shall open and apply this Point.

Use of the Point.

Is it so, That Christ and Self are opposites? And are the Saints too ready to seek, and set up Self in what they do? as *Peter*, *Mar.* 8. 33. *Peter* began to rebuke Christ, when he told his Disciples

ples of his sufferings; *Peter* said, *Be it far from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee:* as if he should say, *Save thy self from these Sufferings, Matth.* 16. 22. Upon which Christ teacheth Self-denyall, *Mar.* 8. 34. Oh then be exhorted to take heed of *Self* in all your Duties, Actions, Seekings, Sufferings, what soever they be; that you may be watchful, and take care to deny your selves in them. I know you that are sincere-hearted would seek and follow Christ, and the things of Christ.

And that you may deny *Self*, and purely seek Christ and the things of Christ, I shall endeavour a little, to shew you what *Self* is, in its Body and Members, in its Root and Branches. It is a bitter Herb, that fills the Pot with Poyson; It poysons your Religious Exercises, Duties, Services, *Zach.* 7. *Did you at all fast unto me, even to me,* saith the Lord? *And did not you eat and drink for your selves?* When they thought they had done the Lord good Service, they

they had done it for *Self*; and *Self* had corrupted and marred all.

I shall shew you therefore,

1. What it is, this Spiritual Disease of *Self*.

2. Some Means to cure it.

And to avoid Confusion, I shall reduce all into two Heads.

1. Self-Sufficiency.

2. Self-Love.

And both of these have many lesser Twigs and Branches (that I shall speak to) by which a Man becomes very full of *Self*. And both of these, Self-sufficiency, and Self-love, may be broken in a Regenerate Man, (as they were in *Peter*) in some measure, more or less: But in most, there remains an overplus, by which men are defiled. Nothing makes greater Head against Grace; nothing more contrary to the Life of a Christian, as he is a Christian; to live in, and upon Christ: Nothing more hard, than to uncloath our selves of our selves; to have no Root of our own, but to be all in Christ, that he may

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be all in us; as *Col.* 3.11. *Where there is neither* Greek *nor* Jew, Circumcision *nor* Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scitian, *Bond nor Free*: *But* CHRIST *is all, and in all.*

For as the Humane Nature of Christ is taken off of its own existence to live in God: So by resemblance, a Christian is to be taken off of himself, and his own existence, that he may not live in himself, but in Christ, and Christ in him. I name this Self-Sufficiency, of Wisdom, or Knowledge, or Parts, or Resolution, or any thing.

I might here speak of Self-sufficiency of Parts, for the attaining of Ends, which Mens Eyes are often upon; and in confidence whereof they fall short, of what they would have: As going out against Enemies in their own Strength, or Wit, Because Men are so many, so well armed, so strong, &c. and so trust in an Arm of Flesh: And here God crosseth men oftentimes, and layeth *Self* in the Dust, if they did but see it, *Eccles.* 9.11. *I return'd, and saw under*

der the Sun, that the Race is not to the ſwift, nor the Battell to the ſtrong; neither yet Bread to the Wiſe, nor yet Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill, but Time and Chance happens to them all. Herein God overth ows Men, and makes them ſee themſelves nothing, by defeating them; as *Paul* ſ ith, 2 *Cor.* 1. 6. *We had the Sentence of Death in our ſelves, that we might learn not to truſt in our ſelves,* &c. And herein God makes good his Word, *Iſa.* 40. 29. *Even the Youths ſhall faint, and the young men ſhall utterly fall.* And as by Faith, out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong: So, in this caſe, out of ſtrength they are made weakneſs.

But I ſhall rather chuſe to handle this in a ſpiritual way, as agreeable to the time wherein we live. Of this Self-ſufficiency, which ſprings from Opinion in a Chriſtian, there be many branches of it; which hinder a man from living the life of a Chriſtian, as a Chriſtian: which is, to live off of himſelf, upon another, as the branch lives

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in the Vine: *Joh* 15 5. ſaith Chriſt, *I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abides in me, and I in him the ſame brings forth much fruit*; That is, o live dependingly, and derivingly upon Chriſt. For as the branch muſt be in the ſtock, and have life, elſe it cannot ſuck ſap from the root, it muſt depend upon the Tree; And having life, it depends upon, and derives from the root, by a conſtant ſucking of ſap, and ſo life is ſupplyed: So a Chriſtian muſt have the Spirit of God in him, elſe he cannot live upon Chriſt; but having habitual grace, he draweth life, and ſtandeth, and is fruitful, and lives upon and by Chriſt; depending upon him, and drawing influence from him.

In this Self-ſufficiency, I ſhall ſhew you,

1. The Branches of it.
2. The Miſchief it doth. And,
3. The Cure. The two firſt I ſhall handle together.

1. The

1. The first Branch of Self-sufficiency, is *SELF-CONFIDENCE*, or Self-dependance. This is a man's reliance upon the wisdom that he hath; or his Faith, the strength of it; or the strength of his love to God, or Courage, or Vowes, or Resolutions; Reliance upon any grace. For without question, the Graces in us may be made an arm of flesh; we may promise our selves victory, and conviction of an Adversary, and success in Preaching the Word; as if we could drive our Hearers to Christ by flocks, as the *Spaniards* did the *Americans* to be baptized.

So many may promise to themselves Gods hearing of their Prayers, and acceptance because of their gifts: they are able thereto, and therein, like those *Isa* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we fasted (say they) and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our souls, and thou takest no knowledg?*

So a man may say, Though all forsake thee, yet will not I; as *Peter*: there is self-confidence in us many times, upon

on ſome grace, or reſolution in us.

Now the Miſchief this Self-confidence doth, is this;

1. It makes us Empty.
2. It makes us Weak.

1. I ſay, It makes us empty; Empty of the ſtrength by which we ſhould ſtand, and might ſtand; Empty, becauſe we are full before of our ſelves; Empty of God, becauſe we are before full of Self. There muſt be an emptying of Divine influences from Chriſt, and ſpiritual occurrences to carry a man through, elſe all will not do. A mans emptineſs in this kind, is his fulneſs; and his fulneſs, his emptineſſe: *Hoſea* 10. 1, 2. *Ephraim is an empty Vine,* (ſaith God) *he brings forth fruit to ſelf.* All that is poured into a full Bottle runs beſide; ſo all that is poured into a heart full of ſelf. And thoſe that are Empty of the influence that comes from Chriſt, are moſt weak, becauſe not empty of Self. What is the reaſon we are not wiſe? Becauſe we are not fools. Therefore ſaith the Apoſtle,

ſle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *If any man among you ſeemeth to be wiſe in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wiſe.* So in this caſe, What is the reaſon we are not ſtrong? becauſe we are not weak: 2 *Cor.* 12. *When I am weak, then I am ſtrong.* This Self-confidence deceives us, *Gal.* 6. 3. *If a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceives himſelf.* Self-confidence and ſelf-dependance hath alwayes laid men in the mire, and hath been the bane of men, *Iſa.* 40. 29. *Even the youths ſhall faint, and the young men ſhall utterly fall.* Who ſhall ſtand then? Why thoſe that wait upon the Lord, as the next Verſe ſhews. This Self-confidence is that, that makes us weak, and defeats us of all good, and is the bane of our greateſt abilities. Ye ſee by that 40th of *Iſay*, Self-dependance leaves a man without wings, he falls off his courage. And though a man be never ſo hot at hand, like *Peter*, *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet I will not deny thee*: Yet ſelf-dependance leaveth him without any

thing;

thing; his trust in his abilities overthrowes him, and turns them (like the Witches gold) into chips; For God takes off our Chariot-Wheels, and layes them in the dust; as he did *Pharaohs, Exod.* 14.24,25. Therefore all our Graces wherein we trust, will not carry us out: for saith God, *This shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lye down in sorrow*, speaking to such kind of men, *Isa.* 50. *ult.* It is onely Christ that can enable us, *Phil.* 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me.*

And the reason why God undoes men that are self dependant, is, because his power is made perfect in our weaknesse, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10. not in our strength: therefore he undoes our strength, and ruines it.

The second branch of Self-sufficiency, is *SELF-SECURITY*; That is, when a man is able to hush his fears, and dangers, and to silence them by looking upon something in himself; he makes himself his own hiding place, or refuge;

and

and saith, as *David*, *I shall never be moved*, or as *Babylon*, *I sit as a Queen and am no Widow and shall see no sorrow*, *Isa.* 47. 8. I shall entertain prosperity to the last; as *Job* 29. 18. *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and shall multiply my dayes as the sand*; That is, I shall see God and the light of his Countenance, and prosper to the last.

This Self-security is a corruption in men contrary to that admirable temperament, of *rejoycing with trembling*, Psal. 2. 11. It is contrary to that; And it is incident to Christians that are at ease, such as ordinarily are not emptied from vessell to vessell: for if their Souls prosper, as 3 *Joh.* 2. and withall their outward states be calm, then commonly Self-security overtakes them, as if they stood upon their own leggs. Hence it is, as *David* saith, God hides his face from them, and then their mountain totters, and they are troubled, *Psal.* 30.

Now, for the mischief this Self-security doth.

It

It occaſions God to hide his Face, as *Pſal.* 30. 6, 7. and when God hides his Face, it is a ſad thing; you may ſee it not onely by the Speech of *David*, *Thou didſt hide thy Face, and I was troubled.* But in *Job* 23. 1, 2, 3. *Even to day is my Complaint bitter, and my ſtroak is heavier than my groaning*: Why? what is the matter? *Oh that I knew where I might find him.* God had hidden his Face, and that made his ſtroak ſo heavie.

Therefore, take notice of ſome Particulars:

1. Many Troubles, Vexations, and Afflictions befall People the while, *Deut.* 31. 17. *I will hide my Face from them* (ſaith God) *and many Evils ſhall befall them, and they ſhall be devoured,* &c. The ſame you have the Phraſe, *Job* 34. 29. *If he give quietneſs, who then can make trouble? But if he hide himſelf, who can behold him, whether it be done againſt a Nation, or againſt a man onely?* Deut. 32. 20. *I will hide my Face from them, and ſee what their end ſhall be.*

2. It

2. It fills the Soul with Diſtempers, *Pſal.* 13. 1, 2. *How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me?* And what follows upon that? Taking counſel in his Soul, and having ſorrow in his Heart daily. And ſee how *Heman* complains, *Pſal.* 88. 14, 15. *Lord why hid ſt thou thy face from me?* And what then? *I am a man afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up: While I ſuffer thy Terrours I am diſtracted.*

3. There is Anger and Wrath apprehended, when God hides his Face, *Pſal.* 89. 46. *How long Lord, wilt thou hide thy ſelf, for ever?* And then mark, *Shall thy Wrath burn like fire?*

4. Uſually at ſuch times a Peoples Prayers are ſhut out, at leaſt in their apprehenſion, *Mich.* 3. 4. *Then ſhall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time.* And this falls out, when Man is not ſo ſenſible of Gods holding him in his hand; but aſcribes his Subſiſtances to Habitual Graces, or Parts,

or

or Duties: Or elſe comes to think, that Gods Supports, which come but from hand to mouth, are conſtant Habits, or Currents, which cannot be intercepted.

Note, Now judge you, If a Tenant, that hath held a Tenement for a long time at Will, ſhould at laſt claim a Free-hold, would not the Owner take it into his own hand, to teach the Tenant to know that he holds but at Will: So will God, when long enjoyment of Comforts makes us think we ſtand of our ſelves, or that theſe Influences are Habitual Graces, and come not down of pleaſure from God; then God withdraws. *Cant.* 5. 3. Saith the Church, *I have put off my Coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my Feet, how ſhall I defile them?* She was fallen into Self-ſecurity, and thought ſhe had that within her, that would ſupport, and ſupply her, and cheer her. And it is certain, God's withdrawings of his Hand, or Face, from his People, are not alwayes puniſhments of ſinne; but moſt commonly

monly to ſhew them themſelves, and the Irregularity of their Courſes. So it was in *Cant.* 5. that ſhe might be ſenſible of her Security and Drowſineſs. So *Hoſea* 5. *ult. I will go and return to my place* (ſaith God) *till they acknowledge their Iniquity, and ſeek my Face.* Or to prevent them from ſinning: Therefore was *Paul's* Thorn, 2 *Cor.* 12. *Leſt I ſhould be exalted*, ſaith he. Therefore it behoves Chriſtians, when they ſearch into themſelves, after the Reaſon of God's withdrawings, not onely to conſider, what ſinne in them God may puniſh, but what Corruption he may prevent: For (not becauſe I was exalted, but) *leſt I ſhould be*, ſaith *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. *There was given me a Thorn in the Fleſh, the Meſſenger of Sathan to buffet me.*

The Third Branch of this Self-Sufficiency, is SELF-RESOLUTION, and *Purpoſes*; Either to leave ſuch or ſuch a Sinne, or to withſtand ſuch a Paſſion or Temptation; or to

become Gods, or to stand for God, &c. to suffer for him, or his Cause, &c. Now these Resolutions are very peremptory and high, that rise many times upon meer Convictions of Duty: When a man's Conscience is convinced of such a thing to be a Duty; when the Conscience sees a necessity of Duty upon Conviction, that it is a Duty: Thereupon starts up a Resolution and Purpose in a Man, to venture to set upon it: Which Resolutions, in themselves, are very high; and yet they easily and quickly crumble to nothing: Like *Israels*, Deut. 5.27. *All that the Lord hath spoken* W I L L *We do, and be obedient:* And yet see, *vers.* 28, 29. saith God, *This People have well spoken:* As if he should say, *It is a good Resolution: But mark*, saith God, *Oh that there were in them such an heart*, &c. And so see, *Hosea 6.* 1. *Come and let us return to the Lord*, &c. Here is a brave Resolution: yet mark what God saith in the 4th *vers.* *Oh* Israel, *what shall I do unto thee?*

thee? *Oh* Ephraim, *what shall I do unto thee? for thy Goodness is as the Morning Cloud, and as the Early Dew it passeth away.* And yet this Purpose was good, a gallant Resolution, to return to the Lord. For a man in resolving, must not look so much to that which terminates his Resolution, as that which bottoms it.

Note, That may be well terminated upon a necessary Duty, which is not well bottom'd upon a true Strength. I say, mark it, That may be well terminated upon a necessary Duty, that is not well bottom'd upon a true strength. The Duty ye resolve on, if it be to return to the Lord in general, or overcome any known sinne you are inclin'd to, makes your Resolution to be good: But the Strength which bottoms it, makes it durable. Therefore, saith *Paul*, *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me*, *Phil.* 4.13.

Some Resolutions are palpable Hypocrisie; their very Tongues, (when

they resolve) belye their Hearts: Like those in *Jer.* 42. 20. *Ye dissembled in your hearts when ye sent me to the Lord to enquire for you.* This People, in case of abiding in the Land, or not, they say they will stand to God's Award; but they never meant it, in case GOD should not fit their Humour, as he telleth them. These are like men that will put a Matter to Arbitration, but they will not stand to the End, unless it be ended just as they would have it. Many such Resolutions are in Men, to go with God, till he cross your Humours, and contrary you, till he be against your Drunkenness, and against your Swearing and Lying, and against your ways of Prophaneness and Pleasures. And then it appears, as *Jeremiah* tells them, *Ye dissembled in your hearts, when you resolved.*

Secondly, There are some Resolutions again, that a man cannot discover to be directly Hypocritical, which yet are strong Resolutions, forc'd by fear, extorted

extorted out of a man's mind by fear of punishment: And these are like a Merchant's casting his Goods overboard in a Storm, when he fears drowning. These men are forced to forsake sinne, and set upon good Duties, *Psal.* 78. 34. *When he slew them, then they sought him, and enquired early after God.* A pittiful case, when a People will never come to God, till he break them: But, saith he, *they were not stedfast, in God's Covenant, for their heart was not right with him.* A man will never be stedfast in God's Covenant, till the heart be right, as *ver.* 37. Therefore when a People have made famous Resolutions; *All that the Lord hath spoken we will do*, as in the Scripture before named. A Resolution, that (perhaps) they could not detect Hypocrisie in their hearts, when they spake it: But he that knew the heart could; for, saith God, *Oh that there were in them a heart to fear me*, &c. *Deut.* 5. 29.

Thirdly, Some Reſolutions again are Mercenary; when men reſolve upon Religion, to fill their Bellies, to ſerve their own ends, Like *Simon Magus*: To follow Chriſt for the Loaves: and to run to him onely to be ſaved, Like the Young-man, *Luk.* 18. 18. *Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven?* But he was ſoon tyred; This is like a Flaſh of *Ignis Fatuis*, ſoon out and gone.

Fourthly, I will come to ſome Reſolutions, that are honeſt and ſincere too; as that of *Peter*, to dye with Chriſt, and yet but a Self-Reſolution: His Love to Chriſt put him upon a Reſolution to ſtick and ſtand to him; And though he could reply, (and peradventure he knew himſelf no better) *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy ſake.* Yet he that knew his ſtrength telleth him, *Joh.* 13. *ult. The Cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denyed me thrice.*

I think I may infer hence, from the Text

Text naturally, That there may be Sincerity in a Reſolution, wanting Self-Denial: I mean, the Heart of Man may reſolve out of love to Chriſt, and yet it may be a Self-Reſolution. *Peter* loved Chriſt before his Fall, that is out of Doubt; but not with that Self-Deniall of his Grace, as afterward he ſhewed; and not with that Self-denial of his Love, as afterward, *Joh.* 21. 15: *Lord*, ſaith *Peter*, *thou knoweſt I love thee.* He doth not ſay *more than theſe*, as before; *though all forſake thee yet will not I.* A man may love Chriſt, and yet not have that Self-Denial of his Love, as afterward is ſhewn: *Peter* loved Chriſt, before he denied him; but not with that Self-Denial of his Love, as afterward he ſhewed, *to weep bitterly for denying him.* If your Reſolutions be built upon your own ſtrength, and your managing of your Graces, you will find you will ſoon be upon a tyred Horſe. God doth not ſay to *Paul*, Thy Grace is ſufficient for thee; but *my Grace*; that is, *my ſtrength*, as it is interpreted

in the Verſes following, 2 *Cor.* 12.9.

From hence, Let us learn to build upon a Grace and Strength without us; for in a ſtrength without us, a man ſhall be able to ſay, *I can do all things, Phil* 4. And I tell you, he that will take upon him to ſay, *I will do all things for God*, muſt look to that whereby he may be able to ſay, *I can do*; elſe his Reſolution will fail him. Let a man look to Chriſt, to give a Heart and Duty, before he reſolve to have a Heart and Duty.

Now the Fruit of Self-Reſolution is this; when men undertake to walk in the ſtrength of Graces, or Duties, God is fain to let the Aſs ye ride on, to run out of the way, or fall down under you, that ye may ſee, that ye did not ſee. Hence many Chriſtians are foiled by their Paſſions and Temptations: Thus it was with *Peter*, he fell in the Mire, notwithſtanding his Reſolution. Many are foiled by Occaſions and Temptations, and fall, and fall, and fall, and wonder at themſelves; fall at ſleighty

Temptations

Temptations and Things: Alas, a poor Wench to make *Peter* deny his Master: And all this, to make you see the misplacing, and mistaking of Resolutions. And all to make you be cast out of *Self*; not onely of *Natural Self*, but *Gracious Self*; and not to rest, nor live, upon it.

The Fourth Branch of this Self-sufficiency, is, SELF-ACTING of a mans own Graces: A man's acting and managing of his own Graces. It is very common among People, Self-acting of a man's own Grace. The meaning is this, when a man is habituated with some Love to God, and Faith of the Promises, take him to be Regenerate.

Now when such a man spinneth out a course of Life, and good Duties, out of his own Bosom: just like as a Moral Man draws out vertuous Actions, out of his Vertues; just so, a Regenerate Man draws out Duties, out of his own Heart

Heart and Graces. How? Why by propounding to themselves Rules, and Commandments, and Motives, which may move their Hearts, whereby they come to stir up themselves by Reason; whereby they come to perform good Duties, and stand for God.

Note, Not that I deny, but these Habits are a Well of Water, springing up into Everlasting Life, *Joh.* 4. 14. They are active Principles, they are so: But I speak of a man's own acting of these Graces, when they are heavy, or benum'd, or lye in the Embers; a man's steeling of them in his way. For you shall find a man many times blowing the Coales, and it will not kindle the fire. All the ways he can take, will not put life into them, till he hath learned this way, to kindle them by Faith from Heaven; and hath a way, by drawing down from Christ, with an Eye waiting upon Christ *Isa.* 26. 12, 13. *Lord, thou wilt ordain Peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our Works in us, O Lord, our God,*

God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee onely, will we make mention of thy Name. See here how they depend, *Thou hast wrought all our Works in us; And by thee onely will we make mention of thy Name*, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things, through Christ, who strengthens me.* Col. 3. 9. 10, 11. *Ye have put off the Old Man with his deeds, and have put on the New Man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him. Where there is neither* Jew *nor* Greek, Circumcision *nor* Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scithian, Bond *nor* Free: *But Christ is all, and in all.*

For if God act them not on, all will not do. *Sampson* went out and shook him, but he got no strength by it, *Judg.* 16. 20. So a man may tugg with his own heart, and get no strength by it. In this case one drop of Oyl to the Wheels, is as good as a pound of weight. One drop of Jesus Christs influence from Heaven, is better than all

the

the tuggings and strugglings with a mans own heart.

To act those habits, and to get the heart upon a course of acting, the way is to look to God, and draw out those sweet droppings, which the Apostle calls *Grace with me*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. meaning, questionless, those assistings, and enablings, and aids, and succours, which carry him on in all Imployments. For it is the work of God, and he must do it, as appears by divers Scriptures,

John 5. 21. *As the Father quickens whom he will; even so the Son quickens whom he will.* And *the Spirit quickens*, *Joh.* 6.63. Therefore saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 2.1. *You hath H E E quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* And divers other places affirm the same.

Object. And lest any should Object; This was when they had no life: But having habits they live.

Answ. I answer; It is he that gives life, and moves that life too; gives grace, and acts it; 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. *God, who*

who quickens A L L things, Quickens faith, quickens love, quickens deſire, quickens zeal, and as the Text ſaith, *All things.*

There is no ſweetneſs flowes from our graces, till he act them: *Cant.* 4. 16. *Awake thou North wind and come thou South, blow upon my Garden; that the ſpices thereof may flow out*, &c. This place ſhews, the Garden hath ſpices in it; but they flow not out, without the influence of the wind; that is, the Spirit of God.

Conſider theſe Particulars;

1. The Soul ſunk in diſcouragement, cannot raiſe up it ſelf. Therefore *David* prayeth, *Pſal.* 119. 25. *My ſoul cleaves to the duſt; quicken thou me according to thy Word.*

2. When a Saint would pray, he muſt be quickened by God. *Pſal.* 80. 18. *Quicken us, and we ſhall call on thy Name.*

3. When

3. When he would keep ſtrait in the wayes of obedience. *Pſal.* 119.37. *Turn away mine eyes from beholding Vanity: and quicken me in thy way.* Verſ. 88. *Quicken me according to thy loving kindneſs: ſo ſhall I keep the teſtimonies of thy mouth.*

4. He cannot ſtir up his own Comforts. *Pſal.* 119. 107. *I am afflicted very much: quicken me, O Lord, according to thy Word.*

5. He cannot act his Love. *Pſal.* 119. 107. *Conſider how I love thy Precepts: quicken me according to thy loving kindneſs.*

Now for a Chriſtian to lye for this wind, to blow upon his Garden; to wait upon Chriſt (but ſtill I mean in the uſe of his own means) to ſend out faith, to fetch and make diſcoveries from Heaven, is the living by the faith of Chriſt, *Galla.* 2. 20. for how ſhould a man conceive of living by faith otherwiſe? namely. It is all one with the living of Chriſt in us.

And

And this is a course which differs much from meer walking by the strength of your habits.

Now the use of Faith, in living spiritually by Faith upon Christ, is not in propounding rules of life, and commandments, and wayes, how you should walk: to live spiritually upon Christ, is not only therein; But in deriving and drawing vertue out of Christ, as the Woman that touched his hemme, *Matth.* 9. 20, 21. For ye are said to live by Faith, just as a man is said to quench his thirst by the bucket; and that is, as it drawes water out of the Well: so we live by Faith, as that which every day drawes from Christ.

I conclude this, That a man acting of his own graces, and going on as a self-actor; It brings forth a kind of a dull life; It brings forth many formal Duties; It makes a man much at one, without any great raisings of heart at any time, without any great comforts; without any great feelings; without any

any great lively spirit; without any great growth: And they know but little of the sence of Communion with Christ, wherenpon our life consists. *Joh.* 16. 22. *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoyce.* The influence of the gracious Visits of Christ fill them with joy. 2 *Cor.* 4. 1. *As we have received mercy, we faint not.*

For it is true of our graces, as it is of our persons; *In him we live*: But that is not all, A man may live, that cannot move not stir. But *in him we move also*, *Act.* 17. 28. For saith Christ, *Without me ye can do nothing*, *John* 15. 5.

The Fifth Branch of this Self-sufficiency, is, *SELF-CUSTODY*, or *KEEPING* of a mans self.

I know it is said, *He that is born of God, keepeth himself.* But there you have the property, and the power too; for he is *begotten of God*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. But a man may be himself too much in it, and that is all I speak to; not against the

the Duty; But to shew how a man may be too much self in it.

And self-keeping is this,

When a man thinks, and hath a heart to think, he can antidote himself against infection of sins, and times, and company; or can arm himself against infection of things, profits, pleasures, occasions, motives: Sin shall not break in upon him; no Example nor allurement hurt him: This was *Peters* mistake, *Though all forsake thee, yet will not I, Matth.* 26. 33. He thought he could keep himself safe enough from denying his Master.

How often are Christians tainted now, and come off with shifts and equivocations? come off poorly out of a temptation or occasion of sin? As *Peter* was found as sleepy as any of the rest, notwithstanding his great profession, what he could do for his Master, *Matth.* 26. 40. And so to instance in other Christians, they manage a Suit in Law, many times with as much revenge, and take

take as indirect courſes as others. This buſineſs of Self-keeping is not well managed by many Chriſtians: They do not keep their credits, nor the credit of Religion neither; or if their credits, yet they do not keep their ſpirits in tune with God. It were worth the while to handle this Point; but I am rather now againſt it, than for it: that is, againſt their arming themſelves with their own armour; putting on their wit and wiſdom, and courage, and zeal, and knowledg; putting on this, and upon this confidence of courage, many are ready to venture upon occaſions, and many times ready to provoke them too.

Alas, you little think what a temptation, and occaſion may do! There is not the ſtrongeſt of you, going in this ſtrength, but may be unhorſed by a bullruſh. Who knows what the ſight of the forbidden Fruit may do? even as it did with *Eve*, *Gen.* 3. 6. Who knows what the ſight of a Wedg of gold may do?

do? *Joſhua* 7. 21. Who knows what the ſight of a *Bathſheba* may do? 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. You little think what you may be drawn to do; that which ye hate, as *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 7 15. *Hazaell* was drawn to that which he intended not, *Is thy ſervant a dogg that he ſhould do this thing?* ſaith he to the Prophet, 2 *King.* 8. 13. *Adam* was a keeper of grace, and grace of him; ye ſee he fell. It is he that keeps your graces muſt keep you; He that kept *Joſeph* in a greater temptation, than all *Davids* graces could keep him; for *Joſeph* was ſollicited. If God keep you not, all the power you have beſide cannot keep you. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Who are kept by the* POWER OF GOD, *through faith to Salvation.*

Therefore the Saints have ſought to God to be kept. *Pſal* 17. 8. *Keep me as the apple of the eye.* And have reſolved and concluded there is no keeping elſe. *Pſal.* 127. 1. *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman wakes in vain.* Pſal. 141.

141. 3, 4. *David* prayes, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, keep the door of my lips: Incline not my heart to any evill thing*, &c. His Mercy and his Comforts keeps his people. *Pſal.* 94. 18, 19. *When I ſaid, My foot ſlippeth, thy mercy held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy Comforts, O Lord, delight my ſoul.* The ſhadow of his wings keeps them, *Pſal.* 17.8. His Name keeps them, *John* 17. 11. And his Faithfulneſs and Truth keeps them, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. Therefore we may conclude as *Jerem.* 10. 23. *I know, O Lord, it is not in man that walks to direct his ſteps.*

The laſt Head of this Self-ſufficiency, is *SELF-ASCRIBING.* When a man attributes his ſucceſs, or abilities, or comforts, or peace, to his own ſufficiency: or elſe he gives that to grace within him, which is to be attributed to grace without him; This is Self-aſcribing.

It is true, there is a time when *Paul* must

muſt ſpeak magnificently of his Miniſtery, to vindicate it from contempt: but mark how he qualifieth it; *I ſpeak fooliſhly*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 16, 17. *not after the Lord, but as it were fooliſhly in this Confidence of boaſting.* Chap. 12. 11. *I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me.* And 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Yet not I, but the grace of God, that was with me;* As if it were a thing not becoming him. And there is a caſe wherein a man may glory or rejoyce in himſelf, *Gal.* 6. 4. *Let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoycing in himſelf, and not in another:* That is, Let a man try his own Integrity, or ſincerity of heart, that he may not ſtand upon the commendation of ſuch a Chriſtian, and ſuch a Chriſtian; but upon the ſincerity of his heart: and then let him rejoyce.

But this Self-aſcribing, is a corruption incident to us, magnifying of our graces, or works, thereupon to lift up our ſelves in our own eyes, as if we alone were the great Favourites of God;

or

or as if God were tyed to us for our works ſake: Like them, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou regardeſt not? We have afflicted our Souls, and thou takeſt no knowledg.* And like the elder Brother, *Luke* 15. *Loe theſe many years do I ſerve thee, neither did I at any time tranſgreſs thy Commandment: yet thou never gaveſt me a Kid* &c. This Self-aſcribing God condemneth, *Deut.* 8. from 11. Ver. to 17. The ſubſtance of theſe Verſes is this, to caution *Iſrael* to take heed, that when they are repleniſht and fill'd with enjoyments, they do not attribute or aſcribe it to their own power or wiſdome, &c.

The ſecond Head, before I come to ſpeak to the Cure of *Self*, is,
SELF-LOVE.

Self-Love is either
1. That which is Natural.
Or,
2. That which is Corrupt.

I

I now take it in the worſt part, for that which is Corrupt: for, that I may ſay it but once, there is a *Self-love* ſo Intrinſical to the Creature, as never to be ſeparated from it, while it hath a Being: And therefore every Man, and Creature in the World, hath an Appetite of Self-Preſervation and Safety, and Keeping, and ſeeks its own Support. This is *Self-love*, meerly riſing from the Natural Being of every Creature; this is meerly *Natural*.

But now, we need not queſtion whether this *Self-love* be a Sin, for it is Natural: It ſympathizeth with Nature it ſelf, and was in pure Nature, to deſire its own Being and Support.

This Love of a Man's ſelf, is that which Chriſt makes the Meaſure and Standard of our Love to others, our Neighbour: *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf; God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and Mind, and Strength*, Matth. 37. 38, 39. The whole Stream muſt run to God; *And thy Neighbour*

Neighbour as thy self. Now God doth not make any Sin the Rule of any Duty: The Rule of our Duty, of Love to our Neighbour, is the Love of our Selves; therefore it cannot be a Sin, because it is the Rule of our Duty we owe to our Neighbour. And this the Law doth not so much command, as suppose: It is in every man by a Natural Principle, therefore I speak not of that.

But secondly, here is a *Corrupt Self-Love*, or this *Natural Self-Love* corrupted, or vitiated; And that I speak of: The Inordination of *Self-Love*, the excess of it, is that which we call *Self-love*.

Now this *Self-love*, is a Corruption very hard to find, very hard to observe, and very hard to overcome, in every one of us: *Regeneration*, the Seed of God poured into the Heart, leaves abundance of it to be rooted out, by fresh Supplies, and comings in of the Spirit.

I say it is hard to find out: *Peter* did not

not think of such a Corruption, when he cryed, *Master save thy self:* Nor the *Jews* when they Fasted, *Zach.* 7. It is such an inward Corruption, lying close in the Spirit, and Inwards of every man, it is hard to find.

The Reason is, Because always that Point of Excess in lawful things, which makes them unlawful, is hard to find; whether it be in the desire of worldly things, or the use of them, Pleasures, Profits, Recreations, any lawful thing: The Point of Excess, whereby they become unlawful, is hard to find.

Now this lawful *Self-love*, being in it self lawful; and the corrupting of it standing in some excessive Bounds and Limits, it is hard to find in every one of Us: It is a Spiritual Sin, lyes close, and the excess of it is hardly found, in Point of Excess: For that which makes *Self-love* to be a Sin, is that which is to be sought.

Quest. When doth this *Self-love* ex-

ceed its Bounds? What must it be measured by?

Answ. Truly, by the Love of God, which must have the upper hand of it. Therefore, when a man in any desire of any thing whatsoever, though it be Grace, Pardon of Sin, Salvation, Heaven, &c. Yet wheresoever this *Self-love* goes before the Love of God, that is, when the Love of God is any way under the Love of our Selves, it becomes vitious. Now in this Point of Excess, wherein *Self-love* gets the upper hand of the Love of God, or the Glory of God, that should be above the seeking of our selves; this is hard to find.

Secondly, As it is hard to find *Self-love*, so it is a Corruption, that is the Mother and Fountain of a World of Iniquity, and of most of those Distempers that do haunt and hang fast on the People of God: It is the last of them that dieth, and is killed, and it is a Mother Sin. For if you look into the extent of *Self-love*, it extends into all your Thoughts

Thoughts, Plots, Desires, Hatred, Love, Zeal, Duties, Seekings, &c. And those things that seem to be most Religious and best, there *Self-love* flowes the most, and is a Mother-Sin: Infects all your Endeavours, infects your Desires, infects your Duties, infects your Prayers, infects your Profession of Religion, infects your Preachings; therefore it is a Mother-Sin. Therefore, not without great cause, doth the Apostle, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1 —— 5. speaking of the Men of the last Times, speaking of Professors that have a Form of Godliness, but deny the Power of it; and speaking of them to be thus and thus, he begins with this; *Men shall be Lovers of their own Selves*; saith he, *This know also, that in the last Dayes, perilous Times shall come; For men shall be lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers, Disobedient to Parents, Unthankfull, Unholy, without Natural Affection, Truce-Breakers, False-Accusers Incontinent, fierce, Despisers of those that*

good, Traytors, Heady, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasures, more than Lovers of God. I observe it, to shew you, How that *Self-love* leads the way to all *Corruptions*: yea, it is the beginning of all those *Corruptions*, that mislead the Hearts of Christians, and those that are Regenerate.

To clear this a little,

Why are Persons Covetous, in getting and keeping outward things? Why do they deal deceitfully, in Bargaining and Trading? Why are they so backward to Works of Mercy? So scant towards the Poor, and so penurious towards those that labour among them in the Word and Doctrine? but because they are Lovers of their own selves. And why do the poor Prisoners, for Christ's sake, indure such great Wants, but because Men are Lovers of their own selves?

Why do Professors boast of Gifts, or Parts, or Riches, or any Enjoyments? but

but because they are Lovers of their own selves.

Why do they lift up themselvs with Pride, either of their inward Enjoyments, or outward Possessions, have brave Houses, gallant Apparel, wear Silks and Gold, when the poor Preachers of the Gospel may starve by them, and go naked, and eat Stones for any thing they will do for them? * but because they are *Self-lovers*. So you may run through all the sins named in *Timothy*, and easily find that *Self-love* is the Root of them all.

* *Professors in these dayes, through* Self-Love, *are farre from that* Primitive Practice Act. 2. 45. and Act. 4. 34, 35. *To sell their Possessions and Goods, and to distribute to all Saints, as every one hath need.* I fear, *Self love* hinders many from the reading of these Scriptures; but I am sure it doth from the Practice.

Thirdly, Consider of it as a Cor-

ruption, most opposite to the Gospel-way of Saving and Salvation, which God hath founded, and grounded in Jesus Christ. Nothing is more opposite to God's Gospel-way of saving Man, than *Self-love*: For God, in an Evangelical way of saving Man, hath drawn him out of *Self*, *Justification* out of our Selves, *Redemption* out of our Selves, *Sanctification*, by the Spirit, out of our Selves; so that we have no Bottom of our own. We are saved in an *Adam*, as in an *Adam* we fell: By Christ's Righteousness, Christ's Sanctification; he is *made of God unto us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*, 1 Cor. 1. 30.

Now this *Self love*, doth most oppose and set it self against this Gospel-way: For there is a Self-Righteousness in us, Self-Abilities, a Self-Power, either to manage or live upon our Graces. We do not continually draw Influence from Christ; we do not deny our selves, that we may be full of Christ, because

becauſe *Self-love* remains in us; we do not advance Chriſt, becauſe of *Self-love.*

It is true, our Saviour did wonderfully Preach down *Self-love*; *Self-hate* he preacht up, but *Self-love* he preacht down. Why? Becauſe thoſe Times of Perſecution required it. But not onely Chriſt but Goſpel and Goſpel-Grace, and Goſpel-way of ſaving Man, all cry down *Self-love.*

Therefore conſider, that *Self-love* being hard to find, and beat down; and being a Mother-Sin, and a Corruption oppoſite to Evangelical Righteouſneſs and Salvation: Therefore you have cauſe to be attentive to that which followeth, in the handling of it.

Now for the Branches of it, I think I may reduce moſt of this *Corruption*, into four Heads.

1. *Self-love*, in reſpect of Ends or Aimes; for there is a World of *Self-love* in reſpect of Ends, which men aim

at: And this is call'd *Self-seeking*, or *Self-respect*.

2. *Self-love*, in respect of the means; For there is abundance of it, in the choice, or use of the means, for the attaining of those Ends.

3. *Self-love*, in respect of sins that are in us; and that is two-fold.

1. *Self-love*, because we are free from Corruption in this or that kind: And this we call *Self-flattery*.
2. *Self-love*, in respect of Corruption dwelling in us, which we favour, or will not see, or not take Reproof for: And this is *Self-Indulgence*.

4. *Self love*, in respect of our Graces, Duties, Endowments, Parts: And this is *Self pleasing*. Pleasing our selves in our Parts, Graces, Vertues, Endowments, or any thing.

So that to these four Heads, *Self-love* in regard of our Ends, *Self love* in regard of the Means, *Self-love* in regard

gard of our ſins, and Self-love in regard of our graces, parts &c. I may bring all I ſhall ſpeak concerning Self-love to.

Now before I come to the handling of theſe Heads, I deſire to prepare ye, to the hearing of all that is to be delivered; becauſe it is a corruption hard to find, and that which makes us loſe our profeſſion of Religion: we loſe our time, our pains, our tears; becauſe we are carried by Self-love. Therefore let me premiſe two things, as Preparatives to all the reſt:

1. *The Love of God in Chriſt*, is the ground of all Evangelical Goſpel obedience. The Love of God in Chriſt is the only true ground of abſtaining from ſin. A man may be free from many ſins in regard of temper, he may be of a ſweet complexion; or want of opportunity, &c. But the Love of God, is the true ground of abſtaining, as you may ſee in *Joſeph*, I have received theſe and theſe Mercies, *How then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?*

A man may be free from sin, and yet (alas) not out of sin: Abstain from it, and yet not be comforted. The true ground is, Faith working by love. *Act.* 15. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.*

On the other side, A man may perform Duties of all sorts; Be he a Preacher, he may Preach frequently, and fervently; be he hearer, he may be full of Prayers, Alms, &c. and yet have no thank for his labour: why? because all is steered by *Self-love.* If the love of God give not fire to all his duties, they are little worth. 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *The Love of Christ constrains us,* saith *Paul.*

Now this love of God in Christ, love to God; is begotten by the taste of Gods Love to us. Fire kindles fire, and love begets love. Our love to Christ, is not the first love, but the second; we must first taste. The Wall cannot reflect heat of it self; it must first be shone upon by the Sun: So none of us can have any true love to God, except

except we be first shone upon by him.

Now when a man carries Christ alway in his apprehension; and not only his Benefits, but the love of Jesus Christ; For his Benefits do not beget so pure a love, as his Love doth: I say, when a man sees Christs Love in paying his debts, clearing and quieting his Conscience, and sees his love dyed with the blood of Christ; then the heart relents. And this love to Christ is the true Womb, in which all our obedience is first shapen: Therefore our Saviour abridges all the Commandments, under this Compendium of Love, *Matth.* 22. 37, 38, 39. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c. And thy neighbour as thy self.* Signifying, that it is the seed of obedience, to the Commandments of God. For this is your master-Wheel, whether ye be moved from sin, or to duty: look what moves you, for this is all; for as a strong bias, this carries the Soul with it.

And

And this Love of God, or love to God, which must transcend this Self-love, gives to your obedience,

1. Easiness.
2. Worth. And,
3. Proportion.

1. It gives Easiness to the Heart of Man. That that comes from Love, is not forced nor compelled, by fear; nor duties extorted; but comes off easily. The fire of *love* compels nothing; makes things easie. It was Love, that made *Jacob* endure a hard Service, *Gen.* 29. 20. 1 *Joh.* 5. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments: and his Commandments are not grievous.* Religion is a burden, duties a burden; we stick at them, because we are not fired by love. Love makes us our necks will never gall in Christ's Yoak.

2. This Love of God, gives Worth and value, and account to our duties, and services: whether it be to abstain from sin, or whether you engage your selves in duty; it give value to them.

They

They are esteemed as they come from love. Your duties if it be to give Self content, or for fear of damnation, &c. they are but dung: the worth of obedience is as it riseth from pure love, in sincerity: Now sincerity looks at the glory of God. We in looking at Jewels, look not at the bulk; and God looks how much heart and truth is in the duty. If custom, or training up in duty, carry us on, this is of no acceptance with God; neither will that man have true comfort in his duties, If the heart have not been quickened by the Love of God, to God.

3. It gives Proportion to our obedience. So much as a man loves, so much he will obey; so much he will suffer. Our Saviour makes such a kind of comparison betwixt *Simon*, and the Woman, *Luk.* 7. 45, 46, 47. *Thou gavest me no kiss, but she hath not ceased to kiss my feet: Mine head with oyl thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.* He entertained him into

into his house; but this Woman shewed a great deal more affection. Why? *For she loved much.* Love filled her with a great deal of affection, more than the other. Great streams turn great Wheels. If you walk even in your wayes, and walk in an high-way of glorifying of God; there must be love in it. Therefore if the Tree bear not fruit, mend it at the root: If sin stick hard, and duties come off hardly, and you cannot walk proportionably to God, and his Love to you; mend Love, for that will make you walk proportionably.

The Second thing premised, in brief, is this:

The Love of God, is that which makes you in all things aime to please God, and in all things aime to glorifie God. And these things are contrary to Self-love.

It is true, God is pleased when he is glorified; and glorified when he is pleased. And therefore you may ask me what distinction I make here?

There

There is no great difference: To pleaſe God, is, to look to his Will, what we ſhould do. To glorifie him, is, to look to his Power, or Wiſdom, or Goodneſs, or any Property, for enablement to do.

Now one that loves God, in all things his aime is to pleaſe God above himſelf: This ſpiritual end of pleaſing God, is that which ſpiritualizes all our actions. *Coll.* 1. 10. *Walk unto all pleaſing.* A man may do many good things, and pleaſe himſelf, and others, without any aime of pleaſing God. Now God aimes at pleaſing himſelf in all his Works; and Chriſt aimed at pleaſing his Father; and every good Chriſtian labours ſo to walk. Yea, he rather looks at pleaſing God, than the event; whether it be benefit, or croſſes, he rather looks at pleaſing God.

Now a formal Profeſſor he doth not ſay, I will ſo walk in my Family, or obey my Maſter, or Parent, as I may pleaſe God: A rotten Heart ſaith not

ſo.

ſo. For the work done may pleaſe God; the work may, when the worker doth not. 2 *King.* 9. 7. *Jehu's* action pleaſed God, becauſe he commanded it; but not the man, for he did it for ſelf-ends. A man may make God an acceſſary, and himſelf the Principal. A man that goes to the Market about his buſineſs, may do an errand for a Neighbour, but that comes by the by; his own buſineſs is the principal: ſo a man may do for God. He may be faithful in his promiſes, temperate in the uſe of the creature, profeſs Religion, and be his own man in all this; look no further than himſelf, to give himſelf content, or for ſome by-end; and not have his eye prefixed to the pleaſing of God. You may ſee it in *Balaam*, *Numb.* 24. 1, 9. when he ſaw it pleaſed God *to bleſs Iſrael*, he ceaſed to curſe them; becauſe he could not: and he is branded for a wicked man though he bleſſed; for his actions were naught, he *loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 15. A man may have

have Self-ends, and his ends not good in a good action; and this ſpoyls it. It is not obedience to God, becauſe the end is not right: for not the bulk of the work, but the aime of the heart, makes it currant.

2. As to pleaſe God, his Will; ſo he that is carryed on by the love of *God*, aimes in all things at the *Glory of God*; and glorifying of God, ſets forth his excellency. We can adde no Glory to him; no more than by lighting a Candle, we can adde glory to the Sun: But by our chuſing him above all, Pleaſures, Profits, Honours, Eaſe, or any thing whatſoever; cleaving to him above all Delights, and above all Men; this is glorifying God. Now a wicked Man, an Hypocrite may talk of this, but it is not in him: *Jehu* could talk of his Zeal for God, 2 *King.* 10. 16. but it was not there. So an Hypocrite (whatſoever he talks on) hath not a *Jeremiah*'s heart, a *David*'s heart, when the Glory of GOD goes down: To bleed, and

run

run over in Obedience, it hath no reference to the Glory of GOD. But when there is a sympathy between God's Glory, and the Soul, it is a sign of an honest heart. When God's Honour and Worships go down, the heart sinks; then all Pleasures and Contentments, call them *Ickabod*; *Where is Glory*? that all runs into the *Glory of God*. Though God should say, as he did to *Moses*, *I will make of thee a great Nation*; yet all things are *Ickabod*, when God's Glory is going down.

Now for Particulars, I might shew you, how all a Man's Intentions glorifie God in Obedience.

1. He that intends to glorifie God; in all his *Obedience*, and *Righteousness*, and *Justification*, and *Salvation*, he casts all upon the *Free Grace of GOD*. In Point of all this, and Sanctification also, casts all upon the *Free Grace of God in Christ*; this glorifies God. *I have laboured more abundantly than they all*, saith

saith *Paul*; *yet not I, but the* GRACE *OF* GOD *that was with me*, 1 *Cor.* 15.10. How fearful was *Paul* of being put to glory in himself. *By the Grace of God I am that I am.*

2. We glorify GOD, when we prefer him above all, and before all: It was an Honour to *David*, that GOD chose him before all *Jesses* Sons, greater than if there had been no other Son: So it is with us, our glorifying God is, when we prefer him before all things, before all the World; and find nothing to be compared to him in our esteem; nothing to be laid in the Scales with God, when he is the heavier end of the Scales; his Will, heavier than our own; his Commands, before Man's Commands; his Honour, before our Honour; his Honour, before the Enjoyment of Wife, Children, Land, House, Liberty, Life, any thing; his Reproach, before all our Honour whatsoever.

3. This

3. This Love will carry a man to glorifie GOD; when out of a desire to glorifie GOD, a man is carryed to do those things, which by Nature he is unapt for. What are those? why, *Love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them that despitefully use you*, Matth.5.44. Great things, that puts us all to the stall draught; *Passing by Revenge, overcoming evill with good*, *Rom.*12.20,21. Gospel-Duties much urged, yet put us all to the stall draught. Will Nature love an Enemy? Will Nature pray for Curses? Will Nature do good to those that despitefully use us? Nature will not: For yee shall observe in these kind of Duties, as Christ observes, *Matth.*5.46,47. Like men that run in a level ground, *it is good to the good, kind to the kind*. Therefore this *Love of GOD*, riseth beyond Nature, above all Policy in the World. For a man that should be ready to please God in this, argues he hath a desire to glorifie God.

4. An

4 And lastly, It is a sign that a man loves God, and his Glory, when the Glory of God makes a man better in his Place, than he would be, if he were not godly, or did not profess *godliness*, or than other men are.

Are you a Servant? doth *Godliness* make you more diligent, more industrious, not answering again? Doth *Godliness* free you from that common Vice of Servants, out of Conscience to God, that you may please him?

Are you a Master? Are you therefore a better Master? more conscionable in your Family, allowing your Servants that which is right, forbearing threatning?

Are you a Trades-man? And are you therefore more upright in your Trade, more honest and fair than other men? Not an Oath, nor Lie, nor any Deceit used by you? Are you brought by *Godliness* to that, which others are not?

Are

Are you a Magistrate? Do you therefore rule better, and deal more impartially and justly?

Are you a Minister of the Gospel? Do you Preach more constantly, and frequently, because you love GOD? And do you take the more care, to give every one *his portion of meat in due season*? Luk. 12.42.

Are you a Rich-man? Do you shew more mercy? Are you more pitiful, kind, *ready to do good and communicate*? 1 Tim. 6. 18.

Are you a Husband? Do you therefore love your Wife the better? And are you more tender of her Soul and Body, because you are *Godly*?

Are you a Wife? Do you therefore more readily obey your Husband, and have him in the more Reverence? It is a sign of unsoundness in Religion, when we are no better in the Vertues our Callings require, than other men?

Oh therefore let us labour to walk worthy of GOD, and to have our *Con-*

Converſations ſuch as become the *Goſpel* of Chriſt; that we, and others, may ſee, that we aim at the *glorifying of God*. Though, perhaps, we think there is Reaſon, why we ſhould be ſtomachful, and rebel, as *Jonah*; *I do well to be angry*; and we might *Gain* by *Falſhood:* yet we will not do it, becauſe you love God; *this is glorifying of God.*

But *Self-love* ſtill exalts *Self* on the higher hand; *Self*, in ſeeking; *Self*, in pleaſing; *Self*, in flattering; in every thing *Self* is higheſt. Thus a man may live and die in the *Profeſſion of Religion*, *Preaching*, *Praying*, *Duties*, *Practice*, all his life, and be nothing at laſt.

I come now to the Four Heads I ſpake of.

Firſt, *Self-love*, in reſpect of Ends; any End that a man aimes at, in whatſoever he ſeeks; Though he ſeekes to hear the *Word of God*, *Gifts and Grace of Prayer*, whatſoever it be; that is the Object of his Seeking, in that there may

may be *Self-seeking*. Now this *Self-love*, in respect of Ends and Aimes, which men may aime at, this is properly called *Self seeking*, or *Self-respectiveness*.

This *Self seeking*, when a man seeks good and lawful things; *Heaven*, *Christ*, *the Spirit*, *Salvation*, with a great deal of Desire, vehement Prayer; yet these good things, and sweet enjoyments, may be sought with so large Affection, vehement Desire, and yet be *Self-seeking*.

And this *Self seeking*, to speak generally of it, it is [illegible] *Dead Fly*, in your *Box of sweet Ointment*, Eccles. 10. 1. that flowes into your [illegible] Duties, Professions, Desires; and corrupts them: Look into the sweetest Box soonest of all, for the Fly to be in. This is the *Colloquintida*, that most of all marreth the Pottage: It mars all your Desires of Spiritual things. A man that hath not *Regenerating Grace*, and whose heart aimes not at the *Glory of God*, can never aime

at

at any thing above it ſelf: It marres all Aimes, when a man ſhall weep for his ſinne, and go heavily, and yet be ſervile in it, and grieve for fear of wrath, or the Scourge. It mars all your *Deſires* (as I ſaid) of *Spiritual Things*: Though ye knock at the *Door*, cry *Lord open*, ſeek the Word, and deſire the Benefits of the Word, which it Records; it makes you mercenary, it mars all your deſires, looking mainly at the Wages. And in the way of *Religion* and *Profeſſion*, all men (in whom there is not the truth of Grace) are either ſervile, or mercenary.

1. This *Self-ſeeking* corrupts your Prayers, your Gifts in Prayer, corrupts your Zeal, 2 *King.* 10. 16. *Come ſee the zeal I have for the Lord of Hoſts*, ſaith *Jehu*, when it was for himſelf. Corrupts your Preachings, that preach to the People, though you preach never ſo well: Nay, many times the better you preach, the more will *Self ſeeking* ariſe, and *Corruption* be ſtirring. Corrupts your Hearing, your Faſting, when ye

seek God extraordinarily. This debaseth your Sufferings. And if a Man come to Martyrdom, this imbaseth all.

2. This *Self-seeking* turns *God* out of his *Glory*, and *You* out of your *Comforts*, which you might reap in your walkings with *God*, if it were not tainted with *Self-seeking*.

3. This *Self seeking* (which the Eye of another man sees not) weakens your best Performances, and the best soonest. This Spiritual Filthiness, that lies close in a man, streams into all we do; and whatsoever it streams into, corrupts it, and makes it execrable to *God*, and hateful to him.

Oh that men would find it out; that the Heart of every man would find it out, this *Corruption*, and *abominable Idol* among the Stuff: This that is taller by the head than other *Corruptions*, and yet lies hid in the heart: search it out in all your Duties, and suspect it of all other *Corruptions*. I would be suspitious of it in every publike Duty, and there is

is Reaſon for it; I, and private Duties too.

Queſt. What? *Self-ſeeking* in private Duties? how can that be?

Anſw. I, ſeeking things for your own ends, ſhutting out Gods. Search it out, upon peril of loſing all ye have wrought, or ſhall work to your Lives end.

Canſt thou plead for thy *ſelf*, *Sorrow* for ſin, abſtinence from ſin? Canſt thou plead as the *Phariſee*, that thou art thus and thus? *I faſt twice in the week, pay Tythes of all I poſſeſs*, &c. And thou art not thus and thus, *No Extortioner, no Adulterer, no Drunkard*, &c. Canſt thou plead Abſtinence from every groſs ſinne I can name? Canſt thou plead deſire of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, and Benefits, and Kingdom? Canſt thou plead Faſting, and Prayer, and *good Works*? Nay, can you plead a continual courſe in *Profeſſion* for many years? Can you plead all this, and more than this?

Look over them once again, look into your hearts once again; and so if *Conscience* do not plead against thee *Self-seeking*: For if it do, that will take off all again, *Zach.* 7. 5, 6. saith God, *When ye fasted and mourned in the* 5th *and* 7th *Moneths those* 70 *years, did ye at all fast* TO ME E, *even* TO ME E? *And when ye did eat and drink, did ye not eat for your selves, and drink for your selves*? All this was nothing to them, while it was done for *Self*. Nothing will stick to a Christian in Affliction; Nothing will stick by him, but his seeking of *God*, for *God*. Nothing will stick by him but that. When *GOD* comes to pinch upon you, here he pincheth you; as in that place, *Zach.* 7. Those that had Fasted in their Seasons 70 years, here he pinched them: *Did ye fast to me,* E V E N *to me*? Did you not aim at your own restoring, and bringing back, at your own Enjoyments? Had you any desire of me, and me for my self? There *God* will pinch you,

And

And so in other things; Have you been *Preachers?* Have you been *Professors?* Have you had these and these Gifts of *Prayer, Knowledge, Wisdom,* &c? Have you had *Riches, Honour, Liberty?* here he will pinch you: *Did you do any thing for me? or use them for me?*

And here Christ pincheth you also, *Joh. 6. 26. Ye sought me, not because of the Miracles; but because ye eat of the Loaves, and were fill'd.*

And here *Sathan* will pinch you: he hath been a *Professor of Religion*; But, *Did he fear God for naught?* as *Job* 1. 9.

And here your own *Conscience* will pinch you, and onely upon this Point; *That you have been Self-seekers in what you have done.*

And here your *Fellow-Brethren* (if they perceive it) will pinch you; as *Paul*, Phil. 2. 21. *All seek their own; not the things that are Jesus Christs.* No *glorious Works*, nor *glorious Sufferings*, will keep up the Heart from sinking: That can secretly whisper to it self, that it

hath been a *Self-ſeeker* in all theſe. It will not be kept up; for when a man falls into any affliction, or ſtrait, and ſtandeth in need of *Comfort*, this will be to you, like that of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, *Gen.* 42. 21. In the Day of Straits, then they conclude they were guilty of his *Blood*, then *Conſcience* flew in their Face. So will this, it will turn upon you in the end, and make all bitter to you, when you ſtand in need of *comfort*.

And therefore, the man that would heal the *Branches of Corruption*, ſhall find it an excellent and neceſſary way, to find out *Corruption* in *Corruption*. There are ſome ſins that are the *Branches*, this I would have men ſearch out: But *Corruption* in *Corruption*, ever ſearch this out; Sin making Sin. There are certain *Corruptions* that make all other things ſinful; ſuch is *Self-ſeeking*, for it makes all your Affections (though ſet upon good things) *corrupt*; Martyrdom it ſelf *corrupt*.

He that purgeth *Self-ſeeking*, that man ſhall purge at once: his *ſorrow* for ſin, that

that ſhall be pure; his Deſires they ſhall be pure; his Zeal, that ſhall be pure; his Prayers, they ſhall be pure; his good Works, they ſhall be pure: He purgeth all, for it flowes into all, and breeds a Scab in all. It may be, men look upon your Ways, and Duties, and Actions, whether you be *Preacher* or *Hearer*; and they commend your Zeal, a worthy man, and they ſee no further, (for *Charity* forbids *Cenſorious Surmiſing*) but how full of *Self* mayeſt thou be? And then, as to thee, all is loſt. It may be, thou mayſt have from *God*, an *Ahab*'s Reward, for he Faſted for *Self*, 1 *King.* 29. 21. and *God* gave him an outward Reward: Or, a *Jehue*'s Reward, 2 *King.* 10. 30. for the Workes ſake. But if thou would'ſt have *GOD* look upon thee, as he uſeth to do on thoſe that love his Name, (as it is, *Pſal.* 119. 132. For ſuch a *Look*, and ſuch *Mercy*, *David* prayes for; as *God* uſeth to do, to thoſe that love his name) Then you ſhall find, *God* will be as

little towards you, as you are towards him.

For our better proceeding in this Point, I shall a little set forth, what this *Corrupt Self-seeking* is: which clearly to state, is not easie to do.

There is a lawful *Self-love*, so there is a lawful *Self-seeking* of our own *Good*; whether Temporal, or Spiritual, or Eternal, I might instance in them.

That your *Temporal Good* may be sought, the *Petition*, *for Daily Bread*, makes it clear.

That our *Spiritual Good* may be sought, is clear, *Zeph.* 2. 2. *Seek Righteousness, seek Meekness*, &c. Therefore it is said, *Luk.* 11. 13. *God gives his Holy Spirit, to those that ask him.*

That our *Eternal Good* may be sought, is as clear, * *Rom.* 2. 7. *To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality; Eternal Life.* There is nothing more

* *We may seek for Glory.*

more out of Queſtion, than all this Now if the good of the Body, and outward ſtate may be ſought; If the good of our Soules, and Spiritual ſtates may be ſought; If the good of Body and Soul, in the Eternal ſtate of both in Glory may be ſought; Then may ſome ſay,

Queſt. What is ſelf-ſeeking, taken in a corrupt ſence of the word?

Anſw. Now for the finding out of this, Conſider, That in the good that we ſeek or deſire for our ſelves, let it be what it will; God hath an Intereſt, and we have an Intereſt. In any thing we can ſeek, whether it belong to thy Eternal ſtate in Heaven, or thy ſpiritual ſtate of thy Soul, or to your outward ſtate of body goods, good-name, Family, Wife, Children, &c. there is a double Intreſt. God hath one intereſt, and thou another.

Nothing a man can ſeek, but as it may yield thee ſome good; ſo it may bring ſome kind of glory to God; though it be but meat and drink. 1 *Cor.* 10. 32.

Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, let all be done to the glory of God.

Now the good that is aimed at for thy self in seeking temporall things, or Spiritual things, or Eternal things; that I call thy interest.

That spiritual Glory and service that God may expect to reap, of that thou seekest; that is Gods Interest.

As for Example:

Thou art in distress, and seekest deliverance, that is thy interest: And, *Thou shalt Glorifie me*, saith God, *Psal.* 50. 15. There is Gods Interest. That *Jehu* should root out *Ahabs* Idolatry, false gods; that was Gods interest: But that he should root out the house of *Ahab*, and so have a Crown put upon his own head, without a Competitor; that was *Jehu*'s interest, might be done. And I bring this to shew you, That whatsoever a man seeks, there is in it an Interest of Gods, and his own, both.

Now to speak the truth, In our seeking

ing of Temporal good things for our selves, whether House, or Land, or Wives, or Children, or Health, or deliverance from Crosses,&c. God is usually turned quite out of his Interest: And usually that which we seek is our own, or for our selves.

Who looks at God, or the glory of God in these things? whether House, or Land, or Wife, or Children, or deliverances, or Offices, to come into place of Office, whereby a man hath the hill, and may do more good: who seeks it for God? or who seeks to honour him by such enjoyments? But mens own interest in these, swallows their whole aims, and ends, and desires: And there is very little reference in any of seeking these things for God; But our own greatness, or content or ease, or credit, or advancement, or the satisfying of our eyes, or of our hearts.

2. As God is turned out of his Interest here; so in seeking spiritual things for the Souls good, or Eternal things, who seeks Gods interest? But their own freedom

freedom from hell, from pangs of Conſcience, from thoſe inward throwes of anguiſh which riſe from convictions: Or inward peace of Soul, that they may reſt, and be quiet, and be happy; Theſe are their own Intereſts in ſeeking ſpiritual things.

I do not deny, but God may be earneſtly ſought by a man, as the means whereby a man compaſſeth his ends: as a means to his temporal good, to ſeek God for a Husband, or Wife, or Land, &c. Or for ſpiritual good, as a means to work them for me. *Iſa.* 58. 2. *Yet they ſeek me daily.* Seek God as their drudg to do it for them; as a way to let them in, to ſuch an Eſtate, or enjoyment. All this is but Self-ſeeking.

Becauſe where *Gods* Intereſt is involved with ours, and *Gods* as conſiderable as ours; we terminate our eyes upon our own, and not upon *Gods*. And what is it elſe but Self-ſeeking?

This ground being laid. It will now clearly appear who is a *Self-ſeeker*, and and who is not: For according as a man ſets

ſets up his intereſt, or ſets it not up in his eye or heart; when he walks or ſeeks, or prays; ſo he is, or is not a *Self ſeeker*. For that muſt be the Gage.

Therefore for the opening of this Point further, conſider three things:

1. A mans ſetting up his Intereſt, and not Gods.

2. Setting up Gods with his own.

3. Setting up Gods above his own.

This Point may be reduced to theſe things:

Firſt, Conſider, The ſetting up of our own Intereſt, and not God, in eyes and heart; This is down-right *Self-ſeeking*; This a man may not only ſee, but feel He deſires the Benefits of Chriſt, to redeem him from Hell: But not the Graces of Chriſt, to live to Chriſt; This is palpable Self-ſeeking. Thus whatſoever a man ſeeks, he may ſeek his own Intereſt, and not Gods; be it temporal, or ſpiritual, or Eternal things: This man is a ſeeker of himſelf. Thus a man may ſeek parts or gifts, as *Simon Magus* did a faculty of doing great works: Therefore

fore he would be baptized. So a man may ſeek parts or gifts, to get glory to himſelf, to ſtand above others. Thus a man may ſeek Chriſt; Thouſands of Rams for a Chriſt to redeem him from hell, *Mica. 6. 7.*

So a man with greatneſſe of affection may ſeek any thing and no God. Men delude themſelves much, when the things they ſeek are good things, and neceſſary things: And their affections toward them are great, and large; Now they think they have hit it, and all is done. No, ſoft. Neceſſary things for your Souls, may be ſought with large deſires, and yet nothing ſought but your ſelves. As *Eſau*'s ſeeking of *Repentance carefully with tears*, *Heb.* 12. 17. And the 5. fooliſh Virgins ſeeking earneſtly to enter in to the Marriage Chamber, *Matth.* 25. 11. And this marreth all.

Note. 1. It is certain, a man may ſeek God, and not Gods Intereſt. I ſay, A man may ſeek God, and not Gods Intereſt; that is, Seek God as a means to the obtaining of the thing, and not

Gods

Gods glory in the thing. You may go on in your desires, and courses, and flatter your selves, and be deceived.

A Merchant will Trade with an Enemy, if he think he can gain by him. Trading with a man argues not love; but it argues I would get by him: So a man may use God, to get his own things, and serve his own turn upon him; It argues not love of Friendship, but love of Lust, and desire to get something by him.

2. A man may seek Gods Interest too, as a hang-by to his own, by meer consequence, not as a mans aime; but as an appendant. As a man going a way, will go of himself; but if another go that way, I will be glad of your company; but that is an accessary: So if a man seek any thing, his aym may be himself, but he may say within himself, God shall be glorified too: I, but the glory of God is an accessary, It doth not sway thy heart sweetly, to draw thy desires like a strong byle; The desires do not go on the more merrily that way, for

Gods

Gods ſake: This argues no ſeeking of God, but a mans ſelf.

Secondly,

There is the ſetting up of Gods Intereſt with our own; (And herein I would be warily underſtood,) And that is, When a man can ſeek his own good, and that he can ſeek it for God too: When in that he ſeeks for his own good, or his Souls peace, or eaſe, he can and doth ſeek it for the improvement of God, and his glory, and ſervice too.

Put the caſe a man be in an humble condition, in hammering by *God* ſtricken down in his Conſcience under the hand of *God*, and under the ſence of ſin; put the caſe, that the ſtate of his Soul is not yet ſettled, how it ſhall ſtand with him, for matter of Salvation or Damnation; not yet ſettled. And in this caſe, this man ſeeks righteouſneſs, ſeeks grace, ſeeks and prayes for Jeſus Chriſt, and ſalvation, to be ſaved: Seeks to be free from the curſe of the Law; And to be drawn out of that deſperate condition, of lying bed-rid of ſin.

Now

Now ſuch a man, in ſuch a caſe, as the caſe ſtands with him; Peradventure the ſaving of his Soul, is the greateſt thing that this man looks at. Haply he is not yet elevated above himſelf, to ſeek Gods intereſt with his own, as the caſe ſtands: But his heart is running with ſuch a ſtream towards his own ſtate, that he looks not at Gods intereſt: But is ſeeking to get out of Hell.

Now ſuch a man, (though he be not himſelf able to ſee it,) yet he will be found daily looking at God. He hath haply ſome beginnings of the love of God, that are begotten by ſome ſence and taſt out of Gods word: For though he have little ſence of Gods love, or Gods favour; yet he hath ſome taſt out of the word of God; and that hath begotten ſome ſpark of love in his ſoul.

Queſt. Some taſt out of the word of God? what is that?

Anſw. Why he hath read or heard, That God inclines to poor ſinners, of Gods freeneſs of grace to ſinners, of Gods

Gods free offer of grace and mercy, by Chriſt to ſinners. *Matth.* 11.28. 1 *Tim.* 1, 15. *Iſa.* 55. 7. &c. This he taſts out of the Word of God: And hereupon a man may have ſome deſire to come into bond with God, to come into Covenant with God. I ſay, this man hath, and many thouſands have this; though he do but obſcurely look at theſe things, yet there is an inclination in him: But he is about the ſetling of the ſtate of his Soul yet.

Queſt. What ſhall we think of a man in this caſe, as to the point of ſelf-ſeeking?

Anſw. This ſeeking of things I condemn not, I deſpiſe not the day of ſmall things. *Zach.* 4. 10. There is ſelf-ſeeking in this man; But there being ſome ſpark of the love of God himſelf, and of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf: there being ſome ſpark of deſire, of ſeeking God for duties ſake, and ſervice ſake; though there be not perfection, yet there may be truth in ſuch a heart, as there may be

in

in a man in turning. Therefore it is a comfortable condition.

Therefore let not a man quarrel himſelf out of his comforts here; let not ſuch a man ſay, I am all for the ſeeking of my Souls good: and I cannot finde Gods intereſt ſo dear to me. No, ye are but in the way yet; and if there be but ſome intention of *Gods* intereſt here, it is not to be condemned for nothing. There might be ſuch an intention in the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. though much ſelf appeared in his ſpeech in his trouble, as if nothing but the ſaving of his Soul, had been all that was in his eye: yet *Paul* encouraged him, and gave him further direction. But more clearly in thoſe *Act.* 2. They had ſome taſte of Jeſus Chriſt from the word they heard from *Peter*, and fell into a ſad diſtemper as perſons utterly hopeleſs, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* and yet theſe proved (after further incouragement, and inſtruction) precious, ſelf-de-

denying Saints; as appears in the ſequell of the Chapter.

Queſt. But now, put the caſe a man do not know which of the two Intereſts he ſeeks moſt, *Gods* or his own, in any thing: I ſay, put the caſe a man cannot here diſtinguiſh himſelf, whether he ſeeks *Gods* grace, or *Gods* Benefits the moſt, as I may ſay; he cannot tell which is the moſt deſirable thing in his eye?

Anſw. I anſwer, this is certain, a man ſhould not ſeek God, and his own good, as things co-ordinate; that is as the two laſt ends he ayms at. As two parallel laſt ends, ſtanding upon a plain, and levell; this I ſhould not do: and if I do it, I am not (though there may be truth) riſen to that height, I ſhould come to. But I muſt ſeek my own good as a means to Gods glory. As *Joſhua* did, *Chap.*7,8,9. *Oh Lord*, ſaith he, *what ſhall I ſay, when* Iſrael *turns their backs before their enemies? For the* Canaanites *and all the Inhabi-*

tants

tants of the Land ſhall hear of it, and ſhall environ us round, and cut off our name from the Earth: Here he pleads for *Iſraels* good; but mark it, with reference to God's glory: therefore he adds, *And what wilt thou do to thy great name?* But in the mean time, that a man ſtands upon a level poyſe, and ſeeks God and his glory in ſincerity, without wheeling it about, to bring the water to his own Mill: though he cannot diſtinguiſh at preſent; I cannot condemn this neither; for here is ſome grace, and deſire after God. For there may be truth where there is not perfection: And therefore after more taſts of God, and more conflicts to get out of ſelf, ſuch a man ſhall perceive it.

Thirdly, The third thing is, the ſetting up of *Gods* Intereſt above our own; and we ſhould not ſtay till we come hither. I dare not be ſo harſh upon good grounds, to condemn the former. But yet we ſhould not ſtay till we come here, in ſetting of Gods intereſt above our own.

Now

Now Gods interest is set up above our own two wayes.

1. When Gods Interest overtops our own.

2. When Gods Interest excludes our own.

1. When Gods Interest overtops our own, in our eyes; for alwayes in it self it is better; but in our eyes, to us. In your preachings, walkings, and seekings, if the Interest of God have overtopt your own, it is right; when a mans last reference is his grace, the last thing he doth refer to, is joy that he seeks, and humility that he seeks, and parts and gifts that he seeks, and Salvation too; but all this without God is nothing.

The first thing is, that he might have union and communion, and fellowship with God: for that which we call *Gods* glory lies dark: therefore I say, That a man may have union, and communion, and fellowship with God: For a mans fellowship with God, is above all a mans honour, credit with men, above

above all eaſe, &c. I ſhould get above all theſe things in my reference. Thus did Chriſt, *John* 17. 1. *Father, glorifie thy Sonne, that thy Sonne may glorifie thee.* Here is a reference, glorifie thy Sonne in his death, glorifie thy Sonne in his Reſurrection, that thy Sonne may glorifie thee. So ſhould we; Father, give me parts, give me gifts, give me Learning, give me knowledge, give me eaſe, give me peace, that thy Servant may glorifie thee: That thou mayſt have thy Intereſt out of my parts, and gifts, and learning, and knowledge, and peace. Thus a man may ſeek his own glory. When a mans heart clearly and purely runs upon this, this is the right and perfect frame and temper of ſpirit. This argues God is in your duties, and God is in your ſpirits, and God is in your hearts; this is ſweet. This argues a right frame, when the love of God, and my deſire of fellowſhip with God, is the chief Load-ſtone that draws me to do, or ſuffer, or ſeek.

It

It is well with you whosoever you are, when not in word onely you say it; but in heart and frame of spirit, ye can thus distinguish of Gods Interest above your own, and set it above your own; and this in every action and duty, if it were sifted into: For it is the property of a good heart, in any thing he would do, or seek; to be delivered from the Plague, or sword, or enemies, to say, and what is Gods Interest in this thing? how may this redound to God, and my better enjoying fellowship with God? And having found that, to let a mans own interest fall under that, and his own to be desirable and leading, onely with reference to that. This is the Master-piece of all your comforts; and it is the property of a good heart to ask after it, and see wherein Gods Interest lies: and then pull down your own under it.

The second way wherein we seek Gods Interest above our own, is, when we seek GOD's excluding ours, shut-

shutting it out: and that in cases that concerns our glory most highly; then to do it, what say you to that? This was the case of *Moses*, and *Paul*, *Exod.* 32.32. *Rom* 9.3. The one could rather wish to be blotted out of Gods Book: And the other could wish to be *Anathema*, (and he loved Christ dearly) rather than God should not glorifie himself, in forgiving *Israels* sin, and converting his Covenant-people. Both of them were upon one point; for if God should not forgive, and convert his Covenant people, they thought the glory of God would come down. It was in both of them a high rapture, absolutely; I cannot make this a necessary pattern to us, not in matter of seeking the salvation of our Souls; to seek Gods Interest, with an utter excluding of ours, unless we were Officers as they were. To take to heart the case of Gods Covenant people, so? I conceive, that a man is bound to carry so high a notion no more, than he is bound to be wrapt up into the third Heavens.

But now, let not any man complement, and make himself as able as *Moses* and *Paul*. It is well if ye can imitate Christ, *John* 17. 1. *Father, glorifie thy Son, that thy Son may glorifie thee.* It is well if ye can seek to be glorified with parts and gifts, and graces, that God may be glorified. If you can see Gods Interest over-topping your own; though your own be not excluded. As in that admirable method of the Lords Prayer, *Hallowed be THY Name*; over-topping our *Daily Bread*, but not excluding it.

Some Monkish devotions in their Soliloquies write, They could be in Hel, where *Judas* is, if God would have them there; but I believe it not. The way of Gods Word, is to set Gods Interest above your own; That is the way: till we can see Gods Interest over-topping our own, we lie in doubt.

Queſt. But may some say, Is it not necessary that God may serve his own Interest upon me, with the loss of mine? And am not I to seek it may be so?

In answer to this Objection or Question,

ſtion, we muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt ſuch things, as are eſſentiall to Gods glorifying himſelf in us: Neceſſary to Gods glorifying of himſelf in us: or our glorifying of God. Such as our having of *Jeſus Chriſt*, or our having of faith in God, or our having of the ſpirit, or Juſtification, or Glorification. And it is not neceſſary we ſhould loſe theſe, becauſe God hath tyed theſe and his glory together; and why ſhould we be tyed to cut the Chain? *Iſa.* 43. 21. *This people have I formed for my ſelf*, (ſaith God) *they ſhall ſhew forth my praiſe.* And the praiſe of the glory of his grace, is his greateſt glory. *Epheſ.* 1. 6. Therefore I ſay, why ſhould we be tyed to part them?

But then, in other things, that are not eſſential to *Gods* glory; as liberty, eaſe, health, life, ſuch a meaſure of grace, or gifts; ſuch meaſure of joy: ſuch parts, that we may be without, and God glorified no leſs too, and we ſaved too; here we ſhould ſeek Gods Intereſt, and be content to loſe

our own Interest. As in affliction; why Lord? If joy may hinder thy Interest, if thou mayst be glorified, I am content to be in sorrow. So *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. If God might be glorified by the thorn in the flesh, then he would be content to have it stick still. If God glorifie himself another way, where the linking of Gods glory, and those things are not necessary: here a Christian may be contented to be without them. And here a man may sweetly comfort himself, that Christ may reign over him as he will: If he will not reign in him as a man of parts; yet as a man mourning after Christ, as a man in Covenant with Christ.

And now you may see what *Self-seeking* is; hypocritical self in men, is the dividing of *Gods* Interest from their own: And the very godly are too much stained with this, in seeking their own, though they take in *Gods* with it.

A man may habitually intend seeking *God*, and yet in an action seek himself. Therefore you must in your whole in-

intentions, have your bent to ſeek God, not only habitually, but actually; for this *Self-ſeeking* will ſtain your Duties, and Parts, and Gifts.

Now all the queſtion is, all a mans life long, of the bounds between God and himſelf; and your overflowings into Gods intereſt, and drowning your own; drowning your own comforts, and contentments, and priviledges, &c.

To anſwer this, I would adviſe you to conſider the Maladies and Miſchiefs of this Self-ſeeking, that ye may be ſtirred up to find it out. And I tell you,

1. *Self ſeeking* may be the ground of moſt excellent Duties; It may be the ground of Preaching, and of performing, and reforming a Church, & Houſe, and Town, and Perſon; of great travels and labours for God, of great ſufferings and reproach for the Cauſe of God: *Self ſeeking* may be the ground of all. Therefore ſearch into your ſelves, eſpecially if you be men in Office in the Church of Chriſt, or in the Commonwealth: men of parts, men of ſtanding

in Religion see if *Self seeking*, Applause, draw you not.

2. Do you plead Faith in Christ? If a man be a *Self seeker*, he cannot be a *Believer*. Our Saviour hath a notable speech, that might be drawn into fine *Observations* concerning this Point. *Joh.* 5. 44. *How can ye believe that receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that comes of God onely?* Ye that are not contented to set up God, and God alone; how can ye believe? If a man seek himself, and his credit, and glory, and seek not God downright, he cannot believe.

3. You say you have Experiments; You that are *Self-seekers*, (if you have) you have but learned them by rote; you have read them, or heard them; you cannot speak of any experimentall sealings, if you be *self-seekers*. All your Experiments and Sealings, and Revealings, are but Delusions of the Devil: God never sealed a self-seeking action with his own Seal; If Comforts, if Joy, if Peace, have followed such prayers, and

and profession as yours, that have been *Self seekers*; It is as sure to be Satan, as there is light in the Sun. Thou mayst be filled with joy, and over-filled with false flattery; but God never set the Seal of his Spirit to such a heart, where God hath not been sought: Will God seal a lye? I speak to them that have not sought God. Have you done great things, rooted out *Baal*, entred into profession, been baptized, consorted with the Saints, and stood when others have fallen, and when Religion hath been scorned? So did *Simon Magus*; And yet it was but to seek himself: All this is nothing to you.

For if thou beest a *Self-seeker*, there is an inequality in all thy wayes; though God be concerned in all things, yet he that seeks himself, will not walk in all things alike with God: For if thou seek thy self, thou wilt perform This duty, but not That. Thou wilt fast and pray, but not leave thy exactions, *Isa.* 58. 3. Thou canst root out *Baal*'s Idolatry, false gods; but not *Jeroboams*, to have

ſome invention of men to mind thee of God: then thou rooteſt out *Baals* for thine own end. Thou prayeſt, and hearеſt, and performeſt many good duties; but wilt not enter into ſuch a profeſſion as is moſt oppoſed of the world: though it be the truth. Some Commands of Chriſt ſhall be done, but not all. Here is ſelf-ſeeking, and ſelf-praying, and ſelf-faſting, and ſelf-zeal, and ſelf-obedience. This is that which undoes men, and makes them loſers of what they ſeek: For as Chriſt ſaith, *Seek life and loſe it, Matth.* 10. 39. So in this caſe, ſeek applauſe, and loſe applauſe; for God will croſſe men in that they ſeek for. This is that, that makes men loſe all after many years profeſſion. This brought *Simon Magus* to light. Therefore in all things labour to make God your beſt reward; your enjoying of God, and fellowſhip with God, your beſt reward: God is his own beſt reward, in duties, in prayer; do you ſo, let him be your beſt reward: And then a man may ſweetly go on, and there

would

would be no danger in his ſeeking.

But before we paſſe from this Point, of *Self-love* in reſpect of ends, I have 3. or 4. more Particulars to ſpeak to: And I ſhall deliver ſome *Propoſitions* concerning this Point of by-ends, ſelfiſhneſſe of Ends and Ayms; when a man looks awry from God, towards himſelf, or ſome other thing.

The Firſt Point is, *That a Chriſtian may ſeek other things beſide, and under, God, that he may aym at in his ſeeking.* How, and in what caſes, this may be done, I have largely touched already; and ſhall ſpeak more in ſome of the following *Propoſitions*, therefore I ſay no more to that.

The Second Point or Propoſition is this, *That God may be ſought unto, and intended, and looked at; but not as our main end.* And this is the ſeeking of God undirectly and unduly.

A man may have God in his eye, and ſo ſeem a Chriſtian, and a ſincere man: when God lies not next his heart in his intention, his main intention. *Ezek.* 33.

31. saith God, *This people come and sit before thee as a people cometh, and they hear thy words, and thou art unto them as a very lovely song, of one that hath a good voyce, and can play well upon an Instrument: But they will not do thy words.* Why? Their main intention goeth another way, *Their heart goes after their Covetousness.* And, *shew my People their sins,* saith God. *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my wayes,* Isa. 58. 1, 2. *They ask of me Ordinances of Justice, and take delight in approaching to God.* Mark what God saith here; And yet, *Shew them their sins.*

I shall shew you, how men may intend God, and look at him, and yet God not regard them, in this way of their seeking him. And it is a Point worth considering, that men may see the delusions of their hearts, and the windings and turnings of them; whereby they appear to themselves to be a people of righteousness, because some way they look at God: And yet it may be without any truth in them, or regard of God.

Now

Now God may be intended by a man two wayes, and both falſe:

1. When we ſeek God onely as a means.

2. As an acceſſary. Theſe two ways we halt in; theſe blind our eyes.

1. When God is ſought meerly as a means, to attain other things. God may be earneſtly and early ſought, with a great deal of zeal, as a means to attain other things. Juſt as a man ſeeks a workman, to do ſuch a thing for him, that he cannot do himſelf: So a man in this caſe, ſeeks to uſe the wiſdom of God, or the power of God, to compaſs other ends, to get ſome prize, that we more aym at. This kind of ſeeking God, argues no love to God at all; as there may be hatred under flattery: for ſuch ſeeking God to help us out of the bryers, and ſo call him our *High God*, our *Rock*, and our *Redeemer*, *&c.* this is called but flattering of God. *Pſal.* 78. 35, 36. *They remembred God was their rock, and the High God their Redeemer. Nevertheleſs, they did but flatter him with their*

their mouth, and lyed unto him with their tongue.

A Merchant will Trade with an Enemy; not out of love to his perſon, but hope to gain by him, and an aym of advantage by him: So a Profeſſour will Trade with God in holy Duties, not out of ſincere love to him; But hope to get and gain by him. Thus ſaid God, *They ask of me Ordinances of Juſtice, Iſa.* 58.2. They faſt, and call him their Rock and Redeemer; when in all they ſeek him as a means, for their own end: For in all this men aym not at God.

A Fowler in ſhooting at a Fowl, uſeth his ſtalking horſe, as a Covert to hide him from the Fowl: So do men uſe God and his Religion, but as a Cover to lye under while they get a ſhoot: To uſe the hand of God to do that for us, which elſe will not be done. And ſo *Simon Magus* went a ſtalking under Baptiſm, to get a faculty of doing great works.

How earneſtly, and with what ſhew of *Piety* did *Balaam* ſeek to *God*; but it

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was, that he might get *Balacks* Gold, for he loved the wages of Unrighteousness, *Numb.* 22. 19. *Now therefore I pray you tarry here this Night that I may see what the Lord will say to me.* And his often offering Sacrifice, argued his Fervency and Zeal; and all was for the Wages of Unrighteousness. I say, let the seeking of *God* be with never so much earnestness and zeal, and delight in *God*; let *God* be never so highly honoured in his Titles; let our Affections, thus seeking of him, overflow the Banks; yet all is nothing, so long as you make *God* as a Servant to your own Ends, and a Bridge to some other thing. What accompt *God* makes of these Duties, you may see all the Scripture over, *Isa* 58. 5. *Will you count this a Fast, and an acceptable Day to the Lord? Did ye not fast for your selves? And did ye fast to me, EVEN to me?* Zach. 7. Change the Name, and say, Did ye preach to me, and pray to me, and profess to me? *They assemble themselves* (saith he) *for Corn and Wine, Hos.* 7. 14.

GOD looks at mens Ends; And yet men commonly do look highly at such Duties, and Services, wherein you seek *GOD*, if there be Zeal and Affection stirring; as appears by this place, *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Isa.* 58. 3. We have done this and this, and thou takest no knowledg. As if *God* took their Services a great: What, (saith *God*) *Do you think to make me your Drudg? It shall never be.*

Obj. But you may say, *Is not God to be sought, as the means and worker of all good for us? And is not Christ merly the Means of all good for us, by his Offices? How then can this be charged as a sinne?*

Ans. No question but *GOD* and *Christ* are to be sought unto, as a means of that we would do, or enjoy. Those that bring forth Fruit to *God*, must do it by Christ, *Rom.* 7. 4. and must seek and expect it from *God*, *Hos.* 14. 8.

We may use *God* as a means to work in us, or give those things to us, whereof himself is the End. We may use him as

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a means, of that End that *God* requires: But here is the *Errour*, when you make *God* the means of your *Self-ends*; when you seek him for things either onely, or chiefly, to serve your own turns.

It may be the things ye seek GOD for, are things that are as apt to be useful for *God*, as your selves: So were the working of great Works, in the time of *Simon Magus*.

But here is not the Question, What the thing is apt to be? but what was *Simon Magus* his End, in seeking the Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*: For though the giving of the *Holy Ghost*, by the laying on of Hands, did conduce to *God's* glory, yet he lookt at his own end. So the Question is, *Where your Intentions lye*? We many times aim at our own share, and not *Gods*, though *Gods* might come in. This is decipher'd out in him that came to the Wedding, *Matth.* 22. 11. He might have come to have honoured the *Bridegroom*, as well as for *good cheer*: But he aimed at *good cheer*, the filling of his Belly, and not at the *Bridegrooms* honour. Now,

Now this represents a man that comes to the *Gospel*, and seeks the good of it; to seek his own safety or freedom from *Hell*, there: But he seeks not the putting himself under the Service of Christ, or the Honour of Christ.

Now this *Errour*, of seeking *God* for our own Ends, wherein men content themselves, may be thus discovered, and found out; when *God* is sought, as a Means to bring to pass other things, but not as the Main.

First, He that seeks any thing of *God* for *God*, whether Grace, or Gifts, or Comforts, or any thing, cannot be satisfied with the receiving of the thing it self respectively, or tending to himself, by that he seeks; wherein *GOD* hath not such a share, or so immediate an Interest, as in some other thing. *Moses* seeks at *God's* hand the Immunity of *Israel*, and he is importunate with *God*, not to disgrace himself, by destroying them. *Be content*, saith God, *let me alone, and I will make of thee a great Nation*; No, that shall not take *Moses* off,

off; though that were for *Moſes* turn, that will not content him: But ſtill he proceeds to ſeek the Glory of *God*, in the preſervation of that People, though he were a Loſer by it, *Exod.* 32. 10, 11.

So to inſtance the Caſe in our ſelves; A Miniſter that ſeeks Abilities of *God*, for ſucceſs in his Miniſtry, ſhould *God* give him ſuch Parts and Abilities, to make him plauſible and admirable, without ſuch Fruit and Effect of his Miniſtry, in converting Soules; this would not ſatisfie a pure heart: He would rather be counted a Fool, (as *Paul* in the *Corinthians*) and win Souls, 1 *Cor.* 4. 10. than a flaunting *Rhetoritian*, and have no Fruit.

2. He that ſeeks any thing of *God*, for *God*, is able to go without the thing in kind, ſo *God* give him ſomething in the room of it, that may be found more uſeful to *God's* End: Let it be Grace, or what ye will, he is able to go without it in kind, if another thing may be more uſeful to *God's* End. Thus *Paul* ſeeks

ſeeks the removing of the Thorn, and Meſſenger of *Satan*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9, 10. But having ſufficiency of Grace promiſed him; that gives him as great ſatisfaction and rejoycing, as if he had had the thing in kind. *Abraham* came forth of his Countrey to *Canaan*; and doing ſo, he is able to leave it, when he ſaw *God* did not give him ſo much as to ſet the ſole of his Foot on, *Act.* 7. 5. Why? He was taken up with the Thoughts of a City, *whoſe Builder and Maker is God*, Heb. 11. 15, 16.

If a Chriſtian, in like caſe, ſeek inward peace and eaſe; if, inſtead of this, he find *humbling ſorrows* more uſefull for *God*'s End in it; namely, to plough up his Pride, and wantonneſs of heart, he will rejoyce therein.

But men that ſeek *God* for their own ends, muſt be anſwer'd in kind; becauſe that ſerves their own ends that they have ſet up, and other things will not. Like a Carnal *Iſraelite*, that goes out to ſeek the Milk and Honey of a *Canaan*; an humbling Wilderneſs in the way diſ-

diſcontents him; becauſe that croſſes the End, that he had propounded to himſelf.

3. He that ſeeks any thing of *God*, for *God*, he ſeeks the love and favour of *God* in it: So that it is a great part of his deſire to ſee *God*, and taſte him in the thing, and receives it as a great Teſtimony of *God*'s favour, *Pſal.* 119. 58. It is otherwiſe with them that ſeek things for their own ends; for though they may ſay, they would not have them without *God*'s favour; yet they do not aim at *God*'s favour, as a Sawce to ſweeten the Meat. So *Iſrael* would have a King; they ſought this: Why, ſaith the Text, *The Lord is your King* 1 *Sam.* 12. 12. Nay, *but we will have a King*, ſay they: Not ſo much looking at *God*'s favour, they would have the thing in kind, though they had Wrath with it. Therefore, ſaith *God*, *Hoſ.* 13. 11. *I gave them a King in mine Anger.* So they muſt have fleſh to eat, *Deut.* 8. 3. *Why Man lives not by Bread onely:* Nay, *but we will have fleſh.*

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4. He that seeks any thing of *God*, for *God*; he seeks the usefulness of the thing to *God*, as well as the thing it self. Therefore, first he considers of the usefulness of the thing; how such Parts, or Gifts, or Graces, may be useful for *God*, and then he seeks it. Thus, in seeking of Faith, he considers the usefulness of it, to such and such Purposes. As when our Saviour treats of *forgiving our Brethren, Luk.* 17. the beginning. A thing hard to flesh and bloud. *Lord*, say they, *increase our Faith*. Rightly considering, that this is a *Fruit of Faith*; and that *Faith* is useful to the doing of it.

So a Christian that seeks *Comforts*, he seeks the usefulness of them, that they may be as Oil to the Wheels, to make him go quick to *God*. So he in *Prov.* 30. sought neither *Poverty* nor *Riches*, that he might be useful to *God* in his Estate: not as a Ship over-burden'd, and so to sink; nor be too light, and so to split against the Rocks. In this last part, I suppose Christians fail in seeking *Graces* and *Comforts*, and what if I had

said

ſaid *Heaven* it ſelf, without being moved to aim at the uſefulneſs of ſuch a *condition.*

Laſtly, he that ſeeks any thing of *God*, for *God*; he will not willingly gain it any way, but in *God's* way; of his *Allowance*, or *Command*, or *Approbation.* Men may come to *God*, becauſe there is no other way to gain the things they ſeek. Like a man that muſt go over ſuch a Bridge to the Town he intends, becauſe there is no other way to come at the Town: if there were other wayes, he would make uſe of them. Like *Simon Magus*, he ſaw there was no other way to do great works, but by profeſſing Chriſt; for it run in this Line, at this time, the greateſt Miracles were done by them that profeſſed Chriſt: Therefore he would profeſs; but not doing here, he runs another way, to compaſs it with money; ſo do we many times: But he that ſeeks things for *God*, *cannot do it.*

Secondly, God is ſought, and intended indeed, but not rightly; when God is ſought as an acceſſory, that is, as an

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Appendant on some other thing, more principal in our Intention, and looking at God as hanging to it.

It is our Intention, that makes the thing principal, or accessory: One man buyeth a Vessel of Wine; in this man's Intention, the wine is the principal, and the Vessel is an accessory, because he buyeth the Vessel for the Wines sake: Another man buyeth the Vessel, and though there may be a little Wine in it, yet in his Intention the Vessel is the principal. God is the best, you say; yet he is sought after as an accessory by us; and this is, when a man's Eye is set upon some other thing as the principal; yet he takes in God with a little corner of his Eye. For many times, in seeking Things, or doing Duties, the consideration of God, in the minds of men, is but as a thing that hangs by.

Thus when a man aimes (in doing *Duties of Religion*) at his own ends, his glory, and credit, & gain; he hath some little consideration of God, of honouring him as an accessory. Thus, saith the Lord,

Lord, *Ephraim is as an Heifer, that is taught to do the Maſters work; but he loved to tread out the Corn*, Hoſ. 10. 11. That is, when a man in way of Religion loves to do God's work; but he loves to do that work, that he may eat as he draws, eat as he treads.

A fine Deſcription of ſuch as love ſuch performances, as they may ſerve themſelves by them, as an Heifer, that loves to tread out the Corn: So though they may look at God, with a half, or quarter-wind, yet the wind that they ſail by is themſelves. God ſhall be the principal in pretence, he ſhall bear the name, when his main End is himſelf.

Thus in *Jehu*, he that could have ſeen into his heart, might have ſeen *God* but an acceſſory, when he declareth himſelf, *Come ſee the zeal that I have for the Lord of Hoſts*: his main zeal was for himſelf. God hangs by many times, as a little Addition of Weight, which we caſt into the Scales, when it hath its full weight already. So *Eſau* wept for

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the Blessing, *Gen.*27.34. when he had made it away: so do you for God.

Quest. But how did Esau *consider it, as a Prerogative, or as a Spiritual thing?*

Ans. Without question, as a *Prerogative*, whereby the elder Brother was advanced; but not as a *Spiritual thing*; or if so, at second hand. So we, when we have made our Markets in *Spirituall things*, then we will allow God a little, when (alas) he comes in at the latter end of the day. You will afford him the back-water, when the stream runs to your own will; and carve for GOD, when you have cut for your selves first. Thus you do, many a man opposes Lust, because it disturbs his Peace, and thinks he doth a piece of service: Just as a man doth, when he pursues a Traytor, because he is his Enemy: He saith, *Pursue a Traytor*; but he could have let him alone, had he not been his Enemy.

Quest. But how should we find which is the principal in our intention, when there is a mixture of things, and both our selves and

and God may be intended? how ſhall we know which is acceſſory, and which is principal?

Anſ. In this caſe, a man's heart would eaſily tell it ſelf, if men would be but acquainted with their own hearts: that which draws the heart moſt towards it, that muſt needs be the principal. Therefore, if it be ſo with you, that in doing ſuch and ſuch Duties, your hearts have no quiet in any iſſue, but where they have the Teſtimony of *God*, as *Enoch* had, *Heb.* 11. 5. that he had pleaſed God: So if you have this Teſtimony in your Soules, that you have pleaſed God, ſo that no commendation of man can pleaſe you, till ye come to find, that ye have pleaſed God, then God is the principal.

That which is the principal in any thing, derives ſweetneſs into the things we do, or ſeek; and the action is ſo far ſweet (though it be an action of ſuffering) as we find God pleaſed with it. If it be God's Honour that ye ſeek, and the maintaining of God's Cauſe, and

that derives ſweetneſs to you, then it is God ye ſeek.

And if Gods and our Intereſt could be ſundred, we ſhould cloſe with Gods, with farewell of our own, if it could be. In ſum, See where thy heart reſteth; for if it reſt in God, and it be reſtleſs, though thou have in thy own Harveſt; yet thou canſt not ſet up thy Cart, till God hath in his; it is a ſign thou ſeekeſt God. And if God make thy actions ſweet, and thou canſt not reſt, till God hath his Ends, and then they are ſweet to thee, thou ſeekeſt God. And then thou ſhalt make an eaſie diſtinction; as eaſily as a Market-man knowes which is his greateſt Markets; for then thou art ſpirited like Chriſt, *I delight to do thy will, O GOD, Pſal.* 40. 8. though it was in ſuffering, reproach, and ſtripes and death.

The Third Point is, To ſhew you whence by-ends riſe, theſe ſelfiſh ends; that you may be able to find them out by the track. Theſe by-ends that have *Self-love* in them are, when in ſeeking God,

God, or the things of God, or doing duties; we aim at ſelf reſpects, ſundring in our conſideration our own reſpects from Gods. There is nothing that a man ſeeks, or doth, though it be never ſo holy, but the heart of man may put a wry-end upon it. So we read in Scripture, how reading, preaching, praying, faſting, have all been corrupted with by-ends; whereby the heart hath been turned aſide from God.

In *Seeking*; For the moſt part, men ſeek benefits, and not grace. In ſeeking ſpiritual things, ſpiritual benefits; pardon of ſin, Chriſt for freedom from hell, and theſe are Benefits; and in this reſpect Chriſt is every mans prize: But Chriſt with his graces, as a King with his Scepter, to bring you to be his, as well as he to be yours, is not ſo much as cheapen'd by many Profeſsors.

Well, in ſeeking graces too, men look at them, as meerly neceſſary to the benefits; Faith as neceſſary to the having the pardon of ſin, neceſſary to the

coming out of hell: and so men make a meer bridg of it.

And again, A man may seek such graces as signs of the benefits belonging to him: If he had such and such graces, they are the signs of Pardon of sin, and of the Favour and Love of God to him, &c. And no further it is respected.

Or else to seek them as ornaments of us; for herein God is not much regarded: the serviceableness of grace for God, Faith for the usefulness of it for God, comes little into the heart of man.

And so in seeking Comforts, it is the sweet of them; not the oyling of a mans spirits for God, that they may run to God. So a man may seek the downfall of Lust, because it torments; but not because Christ should have regiment over his Soul: A man may have wry-ends in the best things.

So in doing duties; In Publick duties, how many wry-ends may creep in? But in private duties, these may be done for wry-ends; As men accustomed to

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private Prayer, they muſt take off the laſh of Conſcience, becauſe if they neglect, Conſcience will call them Hypocrites. When you have accuſtomed your ſelves, Conſcience will look for it, as the ſtomach for meat; and Conſcience will call you hypocrite: therefore you muſt keep your times.

Or elſe, a man may think he will do ſuch private duties, to have ſome ſign of truth in doing them: falſly eſteeming, that if it be private, then it is true. Not to ſpeak againſt men, for that in private, they ſeek publick abilities: but I ſay men in private, may ſeek falſe things in duty. And falſe ends may maintain a courſe of Religion, out of which God may be ſhut out. For there is alwayes in all holy wayes, ſomething out of which a proud heart, or a corrupt heart may ſerve it ſelf: or that it looks at, and eſteems, and may draw on a courſe of Religion a long time; Four Faſts in a year, for 70 years together, yet ſaith God, *Did you at all faſt to me, even to me? Zach. 7.* wry-ends may

draw on a course of Religion, for so many years. So it may be with Preaching, Praying, or any other Religious duty.

Object. But you may say, *It is wonder men should go on so long in by-ends, that their Consciences do not chase them out of them.*

Answ. I answer; First consider, some men do not desire to have inquisitive hearts, to pry into such things: But an inquisitive heart is an excellent keeper.

Again, They think if they seek the things of God, and do duties of God which he requires; then they seek, and serve God. Be not deceived any longer; most of all in seeking the things of *God*, and not *God*.

Again, If the end that lies next a mans eye in duty, be lawfull, then he thinks all is well. It is true, to fast for strife and debate is grosse, that all will confesse; but if the thing be lawful, then you think all is well. But alas, you must do more than so, for you may have by-ends in seeking for lawful things: The destruction of Idolatry, and *Ahab's* house,

houſe, was lawful in *Jehu*; but he did it for himſelf. Therefore ſeek God, for God, and all other things for God; that ſo he may ſweeten all other things to you. This is the chief of all Religion, and Devotion; of all duties and ſervices whatſoever.

Fourthly, I ſhall ſpeak a word or two, concerning the Cure of theſe By-ends, becauſe I have been long in opening the thing; before I ſpeak to the Cure of Self in generall.

And to this I ſay, It is a happy cure, and a hard cure.

For if we divide men that ſeem to be ſome body, and to have ſomething in them, into theſe three ſorts; *Servile*, *Mercenary*, and *Sincere*.

1. *Servile*; that are compelled by the legall fear of wrath to do good duties, and abſtain from ſin; to faſt and humble themſelves, as *Ahab* did, for fear of puniſhment.

2. *Mercenary*; which contains abundance of people, the greateſt number are Mercenaries, which ſeek things of

God, and do duties, for their own ends, and self-respects: and are carried by such poyses, that do wheel them about, still to rest in themselves.

3. And *Sincere*; In whom these ends are cured, so that they are not predominant: I say, dividing them, we shall find that the sincere are few, that exalt God, in comparison of the other.

Many are driven by fear of punishment; more are drawn for love of benefit: Few by the sincere love of God himself.

Now this unsincerity of Ayms and Ends, that riseth out of *Self-love*, is like a hole in a Tree, in which it takes wet, and rots the Tree at the heart; the while it seems fair and sound. This is the hole whereby ye are rotted within: though to the eye of man ye are fair and sound. Therefore the Text speaking of, and meaning the rotting of the Core, that befalls men, that fail in the way of Religion, carried on by the wind of unsincerity; *Ephe. 6. ult. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity*,

or

or *with incorruption*. Shewing, that unsincerity rots, or corrupts a man: And they that love Christ in sincerity, love him with such a love, that they neither take rot, nor rot.

The generall signs of sincerity are, *Willingness to be searched*, and also *diligence* in *Self-searching*.

1. *Willingness to be bowelled by the Sword, or any way by God*: so that discovery may be made. It is a noble sign of truth of heart, a willingness, nay a desire to be searched, *John* 3. 21. *He that doth truth, comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God*. Where ye may observe, *doing truth*, and to be *wrought in God*, are put for one and the same thing, *That they are wrought in GOD*, saith he. *Lord*, saith the Psalmist, *Search me, and try me*, Psal. 139. 23, 24. *Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me*: That is, any warping from thee, or obliquity in my heart or wayes. He that is sincere, will come to the discovering light: He is glad of that word, that affliction, that temptation, that

friend, nay I may say, that enemy, that draws his closs corruptions into his view, and leads him further to know himself.

2. The curiosity of a mans heart in *Self searching*, is a notable sign of sincerity, that is, when a man is inquisitive into himself, and traceth himself out in his wayes and actions; to find out his ayms and ends: And to find the cunningness of his heart, in his wayes of walking, and prayer, *&c.* taking his heart many times upon suspition of unsincerity, when he cannot ly flat corruption to it. This reflexibleness of a mans spirit upon himself, sifting to find out his ends, when a man is not content with the face of his actions, that looks well, till he find the eye, and intention of his heart therein: such a man hath half cured his heart of Self-ends.

Such a curious search, not a quarrelling with God, for want of grace; but curiously to search out those by-ends, is half the cure of them. Because, as an inquisitive and active Constable, that will

will be ſearching, clears the Town of Vagrants, and Thieves; that they will not abide: So a *Self-ſearching heart*, makes riddance of theſe ends, by finding them out, though perhaps the cure of theſe ends, will not be perfect in every thing a man doth; but a ſlippery eye looks awry. But in ſuch corruptions that are without perfect cure in this life, this is a generall rule: The finding them out to our conſtant humiliation, and by their means a conſtant making uſe of Chriſt, is all that can be done. For this the Apoſtle teacheth in the perſon of a regenerate man. *Rom.* 7. *ult.* He ſhews the corruptions he complains of, to be irremediate, and voyd of cure; *So then with my mind I ſerve the Law of God; but with my fleſh the law of ſin:* yet theſe corruptions unremediate, (whereof this is one) they were of a double uſe to *Paul.* To his conſtant humiliation: *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death?* And to his conſtant making uſe of Chriſt, in whom he had:

had perfection: *I thank God, through Jesus Christ.*

Now for the cure of these selfish, hypocritical ends, this is all, or the main, that can be said in this point.

1. The love of God being made pure, makes our ends pure. I mean, the love of a Christian to God being made pure, makes our ends pure; the end of seeking any grace, or mercy, or doing any duty. I say, this is the cure, make the love of God in you a pure love; act and work for pure love. There is a twofold love in this case, the love of friendship, and the love of a parasite. Or thus, the love of a mans person; and the love of our own benefit by the man. You know it is evident. Why now, the pure love of God or Christ, by which the heart of a Christian is carryed to union with God himself; and not carryed onely to the having, or enjoying of his benefits: that is pure love, to love God or Christ in person; when the heart is carried to an union with them, and not onely by the benefits we have

have by them. So that a man loving God with pure love, he hath a high esteem of God, and a high delight in God: and is carried in heart to the desire of union with God. And this love of God, carries a mans heart as high as God himself: for it riseth out of God himself, and runs as high as the level of it, to God; not resting in benefits, but carries out the heart to a desire of union with God, and so consequently beyond all false ends.

Quest. Now this pure love, how is that wrought in a man? Thus.

Answ. By the sense, or stamp, or feeling of Gods Love to you. Mark, not by the understanding of certain benefits, and blessings, and Providences; but by the sense of Gods love in them, vouchsafed to your Souls in Christ. Now what makes the heart truly Evangelicall? Not the benefits of the Gospel; but the love of God in Christ, of which these are the fruits; this puts it into a holy frame.

Note, And this is a Rule, the more Evan-

Evangelicall our hearts are, the purer are our ends. For we muſt diſtinguiſh between Goſpel benefits, which we have by Chriſt, and Gods Goſpel-love, the fountain of all thoſe benefits. Now this Love of God ſhed abroad into our hearts, is manifeſtly ſeen by the Spirit of *God*, and perceived by the ſame. And by the ſence of this love of *God* to you, the heart is carryed higher than by the ſence and apprehenſion of meer benefits; becauſe the Fountain is higher: for benefit is the fruit, and this Love of *God* is the Fountain. So ſaith the Apoſtle, *Gall.* 2. 20. *Who* LOVED *MEE, and gave himſelf for me.* And ſo *Revel.* 1. 5. *He hath* LOVED *US, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood.* That Chriſt gave himſelf for us, and waſh'd us from our ſins in his own blood, are great benefits; but this love is above them, this is the Fountain: therefore ſaith he, *Who loved me; who loved us*, &c.

And the feeling of this love, conſtrains the heart with ſtrong Impulſives,

2 *Cor.*

2 *Cor.* 5.14. *The Love of Christ constrains us.* And the knowledge of this Love to you, fills you with all the fulneſs of *God.* Epheſ. 3.18,19. *That ye may know the LOVE OF GOD, which paſſeth knowledge: that ye may be filled with all the fulneſs of God.* So that the heart that is warm'd with the feeling of this Love, even Love it ſelf; ſuch an heart as this, will ſeek the Face of *God*, and not onely his reward: and will ſeek the enjoyment of his countenance, and communion with him; and not onely benefits from him. And as *Abſalom* that was called from baniſhment. 2 *Sam.* 14. 32. and had peace enough; yet ſaith he, *I muſt ſee the Kings face*; elſe all will do me no good. What he ſpake in preſence, is true in every Chriſtian; ſo that he that is carried by the Love of *God*, to deſire *God*: the ſight of God's countenance is reward enough. *Thou haſt made me exceeding glad with thy countenance.* Pſal. 21.6.

Now by this deſcription, what ſhall we think by thoſe mercenaries, that walk

walk from time to time in duty, and are always gravelling in benefits, and ſerving themſelves? They are eaſily left behind.

To recapitulate all thus, an Evangelicall heart made pure in love to God, that baniſheth by-ends. And that is pure love, that is carryed to God, and not to benefits: And that is pure love, that is quickned more by the loving countenance of God, than benefits; and God is his portion, and exceeding great reward.

Object. If any ſay, theſe are matters of no great weight.

Anſw. I ſay to him, Let as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and if any man be otherwiſe minded, God ſhall reveal even this unto him. *Phil.* 3. 15. There are a world of mercenaries in the World, that profeſs Religion, and are drawn on by benefits: ſeeking God for his benefits. And ſuch of you, whoſoever you are, that are ſo; in time of affliction, or caſting up your accounts: How can ye anſwer this charge,

charge,(which you ſhall be ſure to hear of, though it be many years after, you ſhall hear of it,) *Doth Job fear God for naught?* Job 1. 9. So to you, did you ſerve God for naught? that is,have you been ſincere, and done that ye did for God? did you at all faſt to me, *even to me?* thats it. For God will find a time to look over all his gueſts, that come to the Goſpel-ſupper: And if you come to fill your bellies, and have not on a Wedding Garment: that is, come to ſerve your ſelves, and not to honour the Bridegroom; then Friend, how *came you hither? Matth.* 22.12,13. No entertainment; but *take him, bind him hand and foot, and caſt him into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping, and gnaſhing of teeth.* Ye ſee the danger of hypocriſie of ends, ſelfiſhneſs of ends: And the remedy, pure love to God. That is the principall.

Secondly, By-ends are cured in a Chriſtian, by the comfortable teſtimony which the Spirit of God gives, to particularly ſincere intentions, at any time,

time, or action, or ſeeking, or prayer: by the comfortable Teſtimony which the Spirit of God gives of ſincerity.

There is in the ſpirits of ſuch, as well under the Government of the Spirit of God, a ſweet ſolace of heart, flowing into the Soul; from the Spirits teſtifying, unto actions, or duties, wherein they have aimed at God. And this ſweet ſolace, is nothing but God's ſealing his acceptance of the actions ye have done: and this is a thing, like the name in the white ſtone; *known to none* but he that hath it. *Revel.* 2.17.

On the contrary, when the heart is not right in the intention, though the action be never ſo right, and glorious: yet let the man examine his ſpirit, and he ſhall find the Lord doth not come down by fire on ſuch ſervices, 1 *King.* 18.24. and ſo he doth not teſtifie of it; it is a dead duty, for want of teſtification; and ſo there is no comfort in it.

Now ſuch as obſerve this in themſelves, and find what a ſweet taſt, a ſincere

cere performance leaves it behind: And on the other ſide, what a no taſt of *God*, but a ſtink, ſiniſterity of ends leaves behind it: Conſidering this, it is thereby heal'ed, and by-ends caſt out and cured.

Object. If any ſhall ſay, That God rewards ſuch actions of men, as are right in kind: though they that do them have not ſincere intentions; as thus, he rewarded *John* with a Crown to four Generations.

Anſw. I anſwer, It is true, *God* doth do ſo, for *God* will be a debtor to no man: ſuch actions he doth reward in point of honour, of his own honour: But this is inward teſtimony, and ſweet reliſh in the Soul, and witneſs of the Spirit, for their ſincerity. (though but giving a Cup of cold water:) this is proper onely to the ſincere. Which is nothing elſe, but an *Ergo* that *God* gives to the heart; and from this teſtimony left in the heart, may ſweetly confirm a Chriſtian, that he is *Gods*, and *God* is his. No action that is materially right

in

in all the Particulars of it, meerly by the colour, beareth such a Construction; *that I am Gods, and God is mine:* But the meaneſt action for God, done with this ſweet Taſt in the Tail of it, bears ſuch an Influence: So that a Chriſtian may alwayes walk comfortably with God. And if it be but a bare action, though never ſo good, the Inference will not be maintained.

3. For the curing of theſe *by-ends*; let every Chriſtian labour to bring all his *actions*, to *right motives*, and *right ends*. This is the *beginning*, and the *ending*, the *Alpha* and *Omega*, of every *action*, whatſoever it be: For it is not the *materials* of the rightneſs of an *action* that will do, but the *cauſe* muſt be right.

For this is a certain Rule,

If the *Motive* be naught, the *End* muſt be as bad: *If they preach Chriſt out of Envy*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 1. *it is to add affliction to my Bonds*. The Weights, or the Plummet of the Clock, if it be not due and true, the Diall and Finger cannot point right. And therefore the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle reduceth Servants that were Chriſtians, *Slaves to Heathen Maſters:* He labours, to make them reduce all to *right ends*; *Out of ſingleneſs of heart, as unto Chriſt*; *and pleaſing God*, ſaith he, *Col.* 3. 22. So he reduceth his own Preaching of the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* 9. 17. *If I do this thing willingly then ſo: If otherwiſe, then ſo*; *and ſo in all.*

Always forecaſt, what ſhall be God's ſhare, in ſuch *Comforts*, and *Graces*, and *Duties*; as *Jacob* did, when he indented with God, *Gen.* 28. 20, 21, 22. *If you do ſuch and ſuch Duties, let all your Duties be drawn out of Precepts*; *I am the Lord thy God, which command thee this.* And if theſe things be not ſet right, you ſhall never be able to heal your ſelves of Hypocriſie of *Ends:* So much for this Point of *Ends.*

The Second Branch of *Self-love*, is,

Self-love in reſpect of the means uſed, for the Attainment of our *Ends.*

Self-love, may be either in the End, or

or the Means used for the Attainment of our Ends. And here I shall be brief, because the Means and End do so border one upon another; that what hath been said of the one, may fall into the other: So that the Heart that is not right in the main end it seeks, cannot be right in the means it useth.

I do not say, but some means in themselves, may be materially good; as they that preached for *Contention*, it may be they preached well, they preached Christ, saith the Apostle, *Phil.* 1. 13, 16. But the End not being right, marred all. The carriage of the Heart, that is not right in the End, cannot be right in the Means: But if it go amiss in the End, it will go amiss in the Means; as the Apostle tells us, *Jam.* 4. 3. If we ask, that we might consume it upon our Lusts, that asking cannot but be amiss; though it be zealous Prayer, and violent & fervent seeking of the thing: If it be to consume upon our Lusts, then (saith he) *ye ask amiss*: the Means amiss, if the End be once amiss.

Whence

Whence we may gather this Note, That the Intention any man hath, to spend any thing he gets of God, whether Knowledg, or good Parts, or Offices, or Authority, or Riches; the Intention man hath to spend them, to serve his own turn by them, it is that which doth mis-byas his Heart, in all his seekings, and using of the means; be they never so good means in themselves, and never so lawful and righteous.

God can never have his place in the means used, if he be shut out of his place in the End we aim at: And therefore this Point, of Ends and Means, do border one upon another.

It is true, The Heart of Man, that lyeth close, in respect of its End and Intention, doth many times bewray it self, in respect of the means it useth: So that the Heart is more discovered many times by the means it useth, than by the end it aimes at. A man may partly guess, what another aimes at, when he sees him level his Arrow; so when a man sees what means another useth, he may guess at his End. How

How did *Peter* diſcover the Rottenneſs of *Simon Magus*? *Act.* 8. Why, he ſaw his End, for there it lay. He was Baptized, and cleaved to them that preached Chriſt, came in, and profeſſed, and believed, but the Rottenneſs of his Heart lay in his End: But this lay hid; how did *Peter* perceive it? Why, by the means he attempts, that was *Money to give for the Holy Ghoſt*: Then he ſaw it. I do but inſtance in this caſe, and in this place, for this purpoſe; to ſhew you, that many a *rotten heart*, as well as *Simon*'s, is diſcover'd, by the means it uſeth, to accompliſh the end it ſeeks, for that lies hid.

I will not here enter into a curious diſtinction of Means and End, as I might do.

1. I might ſhew you, how men many times uſe unlawful means, to unlawfull ends: As *Herod*, ſeeking to kill *Chriſt*, ſlew the Children: And as *David*, to cover his Sin of Adultery, contrives *Uriah*'s Death.

2. Men ſometimes uſe unlawful means,

means, to lawful ends: As *Jacob* told a Lie, and uſed Couzenage, to get a *Promiſed Bleſſing*, *Gen.* 27.19. *David* would not take this courſe, to obtain a *Promiſed Kingdom*, as ſure as *Jacob* had the *Bleſſing* promiſed him, 1 *Sam.* 24. 12, 13. and 26.10, 11. He would not lay his hands upon *Saul*; no, God ſhall remove him, but he will not touch him; this is evil: For the lawfulneſs of the end ye aim at, will not juſtifie the uſing of unlawful means; no more than a man's ſeeking his *ſtoln goods*, will juſtifie his ſeeking to a *Witch*; as *Saul* did in his ſtraights.

3. There may be *lawful means* uſed to *unlawful ends*: As asking *Gifts*, *Graces*, *Benefits*, or any thing, to conſume them upon our Luſts, *Jam.* 4.3. Preaching *Chriſt*, to add affliction to *Paul*'s Bonds, *Phil.* 1.16. Here was lawfull means uſed, but the end was naught.

4. A man may uſe *lawful means*, to compaſs *lawful ends*; and all his life-time go on in this way, and yet be a *Self-ſeeker*: As he that readeth and ſtu-

dieth the Scripture for *knowledge-ſake*, and comes to hear the Word for *knowledge ſake*; both *means* and *ends* are lawful: or he that prayeth for neceſſary things, both the *means* and *things* he ſeeks are lawful; and yet he may be a *Self-ſeeker*.

If I ſhould enter into the common place of *means* and *end*, I might read you a long Lecture of *Philoſophie*, and yet not altogether vain neither.

For *Reaſon* will tell you, there may be divers *lawful ends*, of one and the ſame *action*. And they are either,

1. Co-ordinate one to another: As in Marrying, there are divers co-ordinate ends; the *Downfall of Luſt*, the *Procreation of Children*, &c.

Or ſecondly, There is divers *ſubordinate ends*; as Ploughing to have Bread, &c. I might name divers *ſubordinate ends*, in divers things; yet all lawful.

Again, They tell us another thing, That though theſe *lower ends* which men aim at, may be many; yet the *higheſt ſupream end* is but one, can be but

but one; and that belongs not to this or that in particular, but to the kind or general. Thus they tell you, and they tell you true, that the *higheſt end* men aim at, can be but one.

But when they come to tell you, what that *ſupream end* is, there they agree not among themſelves: For though they tell you, *Bleſſedneſs* or *Happineſs* is the *higheſt end* men ſeek; yet when they ſhould ſhew you, wherein it conſiſts: Then (as the Apoſtle ſaith, *Rom.* 1.) *They become vain in their Imaginations*; ſpeaking of *Philoſophers*, *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe*, (ſaith he) *they become Fools*, ver. 22. Yet herein they hit right, that the *higheſt end* can be but one. For we cannot run in a Circle, *ad infinitum*, ſomewhere we muſt ſtand.

Now we ſay, this *ſupream end* is *God*, and the Fruition of *God*; or having Nearneſs, or Fellowſhip with *God*.

Again, They tell you, that this *Supream End*, muſt have influence into all the *Inferiour Ends*, to give Meaſure, and

Proportion, and amiableneſs to them.

And this is true, that the *higheſt end*, at which we aim, ſhould ſpread into all the *lower Rank*, to give Meaſure, and Proportion, and Amiableneſs to them. So God, and our Fellowſhip with God, is that which ſhould have influence into all our *lower ends*, 1 *Cor.* 10.32. The Apoſtle brings down the Glory of *God* as low as Eating and Drinking; things that are many times remote from *God*.

Now to turn to that I was at, or aim at: If a man ſeek lawful things, by lawful means: If this higheſt End, God and Chriſt, be ſhut out from our Ends; ſo that we draw not our Actions to God or Chriſt, or bring not down God to them, then we are *Self-ſeekers*; becauſe we reſt in under-ends, in profits, or pleaſures, in applauſe, in honours, or gifts, &c. becauſe, not drawing GOD down into them; this is that which makes every man a *Self ſeeker*, if he reſt ſhort of God.

And this is the great miſery of men, that look no further than that which they

they ſeek, or do; but they do not bring God into them, to ſweeten all to them: eſpecially Chriſtians, that are ſcorned, for their Preaching, and Praying, and Aſſembling, and Walking, and Separating &c. Whoſe Comfort, in all Obloquy, may be that of *David*, when he danced before the Ark; *I did it for God*, ſaith he, 2 *Sam.* 6 21. This, I ſay, would ſweeten all the Obloquy and Scorn, if a man can truly ſay, *I did it for God.*

The ſum of what I have to ſay, in this Point, will be thus abridged.

Firſt, That a man may uſe *lawfull means*, to *lawfull ends*, and yet be a *Self-ſeeker*; both the *means* and *end*, may be fit to be uſed and aimed at: Both the things a man ſeeks, and the courſe he takes to get them, may be lawful. For who knoweth not, that a man may do that which is right, yet not with a perfect Heart? As it is ſaid of *Amaziah*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 2. God is not in ſuch a man's Thoughts, ſave a God to make uſe of, to attain that which he ſeeks: But

God, as the End to which ye refer, and unto whom ye do reſolve your Aimes and Intentions, is not there. Therefore, a man muſt look further than the meer lawfulneſs of the thing: A man muſt labour to ſet up God's Intereſt, in the thing he ſeeks, or elſe it is nothing.

Therefore, a *Seeker* of God, and a *Self-ſeeker*, are diſtinguiſh'd, not by Duties, (for both will hear, and both will hear as often; and both will Preach, and both will Preach as often; and both will pray, and both will pray as often,) but *by-ends* which they aim at; *by-ends*, and not *by-duties*.

Now it is hard to diſcern this Diſtinction, becauſe Ends lye cloſe; though the Matter of the Duty may be equal, and the manner too: But that which diſtinguiſhes a *Seeker* of God, and a Seeker of Self, is the End; which becauſe it lyes cloſe, muſt be examin'd cloſely.

Secondly, A man may ſeek the moſt unworthy and baſe end, by the moſt Religious Means, and Courſes: By Preach-

Preaching, by Prayer, by Faſting; Preach, Pray, Faſt, every thing, *Iſa* 58.4. *Ye faſt for Strife and Debate,* (ſaith *God*) *and to ſmite with the Fiſt of Wickedneſs.* You faſt for liberty to Sin, *and howl upon your Beds for Corn and Wine,* Hoſ. 7. 14. And *Zach.* 7. *Did you at all faſt to me, even to me?* This courſe a man may continue in a long time, to ſeek unworthy Ends, by Religious Meanes: He may hold out, ſo long as he may ſerve his Ends, by Religious Meanes: For ſo long as the Wind blows, or the Water flows, ſo long the Mill will go. So long as a man may ſerve his Ends, (by a Religious Courſe) whether Profits, or Pleaſures, or Applauſe, ſo long he may and will maintain it. Therefore a man had need look over his beſt Duties, leſt this way he loſe them.

Thirdly, It is clear, That he that ſeeks himſelf, as his End, never ſerved God in the uſe of the Means. Mark this; for this will take away from thouſands, all the Service of God, which they think they have ſerved God with

many a year: And ſo ſhews many a man, that he never ſerved God in all his life. I ſay, he that ſeeks himſelf, as his End, never ſerved God in the uſe of the Means: Though the Means he uſed be never ſo ſeemingly holy, yet he never ſerved God in any of them, when he ſeeks himſelf. *Did you at all faſt to me, even to me?* that is, that you might have me among you to be your *God*.

This makes it plain, that many men that have taken great pains, and ſuffered great ſufferings, in way of Religion; never ſerved God all their days. They may do Gods Commands, and ſerve his Providence, as *Jehu* did in taking away *Baals* Idolatry, 2 *King.* 10. 28. but he ſerved not God in an acceptable way; he did in Gods ſervice ſeek himſelf. Therefore take heed of ſetting up of ſelf-Ends, of profit, or pleaſure, or honour; take heed of ſetting up Self: For if you be the end, God is not ſought in the means.

Fourthly, *A Self-ſeeking heart will bewray it ſelf in the choice, or uſe of the means;*

means, I ſay, in the choice of the means, or uſe of them: If a man would but examine here, the heart of a *Self-ſeeker* would eaſily be ſeen either in the choice of means he ayms at, or the uſe of them.

1. *In the choice of means.* For ſuppoſe a man pretends to glorifie God, yet it ſh ll be in the choice of ſuch means, as may ſet forward his own gain; no other: whereby a man ſtill advanceth himſelf, and gets up in the eyes of men. He looks what he ſhall have, or enjoy; not how he may walk, or obey. Therefore ſuch men ſeldom or never ſet about *Self-examination*. Therefore ſuch men look not at getting abaſements, or down-caſting graces, to throw them down and humble them: Theſe Means he never chooſeth; nor ſuch means of glorifying God, as Great men, or Friends oppoſe, that will bring reproach, or perſecution; that he will not chooſe: But rather chooſe another means, whereby he may ſerve his own intereſt, and play his own game.

2. *In the use of means, he may be bewrayed.* For therein he that seeks himself, may seek the outward part and garnish of a duty; but he never seeks the exercise of the graces of the Spirit of God, to put forth and exercise the graces of the duty. He will garnish a Prayer, or an Alms, for the formal and outward part of it; but then he doth not seek to put forth and exercise grace in them; that is, Faith in them, or Love in them; that is, such graces as whereby God may be honoured in them.

Thus many a man will hear the Word with attention, and lay it up in a close memory, and draw it out again in discourse, and repetition; this a *Self-seeker* may do: But then he will not set his heart awork, or desire to be set awork; to digest it into a practicall power, To get down his lusts, and to get down his passions, &c. and to quicken the Lord Jesus Christ in his heart, that lyes dead there.

Fifthly, He that is a *Self-seeker* in point of means used, he alwaies divides between

between Gods Concernment, and his own; in such things wherein they might be inwrapped, or involved; and lawfully too: yet a *Self-seeker* divides them, and draws out of Spiritual things only self-concernments: I say, he draws out only Self-concernments. This is the bane of all, and kills all: And it is not only the rottenness, but the subtilty of a Self-seeking heart, to draw out his own Concernments from Gods: and to distinguish his own Concernments from Gods, when they might be incorporated together.

There is no Spiritual thing so necessary to be sought, but a man that is a Self-seeker, doth draw his Concernments from Gods.

As for Example:

1. Put case a man do earnestly seek such graces, as he hears of in the Word of God, to his Salvation; or such a grace as he sees in another Christian: this man may seek it earnestly.

Quest.

Quest. How doth he draw out his own Concernments?

Answ. Why thus; For this reason he desires it, that it may be a sign to him that he is in a good estate; And not as a Grace to make him serviceable to God. And it is easie for a man to seek the Beneficial part of any grace, which concerns himself; to have a sign of a good estate, or to make a Bridg of it, to passe him over into Heaven or Salvation.

But *Self seekers* do not seek such a grace, for the serviceable part of it, whereby their hearts may be inlarged to God; to walk more heavenly with God in their places, and Families, and Congregations where they are members; and their hearts kept more tuneable to God, that is not their End. And it is very suspitious for any man, to seek grace as a sign of a good estate, and not for the service of it to God. To have it that I may be secure, and see my self safe: and not that I might lay it out for God. And in this case a Self-seeker draws

draws out his own Concernments from Gods; in that wherein they might be involved.

2. Put caſe, A man ſeek the rooting out of ſome corruption, or paſſion, or luſt, that haunts him, and whereof he is convinced: Put caſe a man ſeek the riddance of ſuch a Corruption.

Queſt. What doth a Self-ſeeker look at now, in the uſe of Means?

Anſw. It is thus: He ſeeks it for the eaſe of his unquiet Conſcience; for Conſcience being convinced of it, fills him with anguiſh and diſtemper, as if his caſe was not right.

Now a man may deſire and ſeek to be rid of ſuch a corruption, that ſo a man may recover eaſe from an unquiet Conſcience; and this a *Self-ſeeker* rather ſeeks, than to be ſet free for God. So then he ſeeks peace and eaſe, to be rid of corruption rather as it hinders his peace; than to be ſet free for God, and made fit for God. He conſidereth not what ſervice God loſeth by it; but what he loſeth by it: perhaps a great deal of

Joy,

Joy, many an hours ſleep, much eaſe quiet: Thus he draws out his own Concernment from Gods.

3. Put caſe a man ſeek Jeſus Chriſt; What can he ſeek that is better, or more neceſſary? Yet he may here draw out his own Concernments from Gods.

How is that?

Why he ſeeks rather to have Chriſt, than to be his; nay, he will not be Chriſts, to lay himſelf under his feet, Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Land, Houſes, Liberty, Life and all. But he would have him, rather for his Benefits to come to him, than that his Kingdom ſhould be ſet up in him. And what dividing of Concernments is here? That the Benefits of Chriſt might be mine, that ſeek I: But not the government of Chriſt within me, and without me; in heart and life.

4. Put the caſe a man perform good Duties, a great number: How doth he now divide his own Concernments from Gods?

Thus: He ſeeks the garniſh of them, and

and ſetting them forth, rather than the acting of grace in them: For God is not ſo much honoured by phraſes and words, as he is by acting of Grace; Faith, Love, Humility, Sincerity, &c. And a *Self-ſeeker* doth them for the garniſh of them; and then he thinks he hath merited by them, or deſerved of men by them: And he ſets his head awork in them, rather than his heart.

5. Put caſe he ſeeks the riddance of Affliction, as *Paul*'s thorn, 2 *Cor.* 12. it is lawful. But how doth a *Self-ſeeker* divide his own Concernments from Gods herein?

He ſeeks the removall of the affliction, rather than the uſe of it; and he can part with it willingly without its errand. Thus men uſually pluck off the Plaiſter (becauſe it ſmarts,) rather than let it do its full work, and fall off of its ſelf. So that men look not at the fruit of Affliction, to purge them, and try them: their Faith, their Patience, their Love of God, &c. But a *Self-ſeeker* ſeeks

ſeeks the removal of it, that he may have eaſe.

6. Put caſe a man ſeek inward comfort and joy: What doth he ſeek it for? How doth he divide his own Concernments from Gods?

He rather ſeeks the ſweet of them, than the quickening of the heart, and oyling of the Wheels for God: I ſay, he that ſeeks himſelf, ſeeks them for the ſweet. Oh it is a ſweet thing to have comforts, and refreſhings in ſpirit! He loves to be ſucking the ſweet of comforts, like a Waſp in a Honey-pot; but not like the induſtrious Bee, to bring it to the Hive; to the uſe and ſervice of God.

So that in every thing, a *Self ſeeker* divides his Concernments from Gods: and ſo in every thing you do, or ſeek, if you will but examine. Becauſe (perhaps) you can ſeek grace, or the riddance of corruption, or Chriſt, or perform good duties or ſeek the removall of affliction, or ſeek comforts and joy; then-

then you think all is well: But mark your hearts, Whether you do not draw out your own Concernments from Gods; for if you do, you leave your duties like a company of dry leaves in a Still, worth nothing. Thus it is when men seek themselves. And though a regenerate man cannot be a totall *Self-seeker*; yet in a great measure, (in these respect) he may divide his own Concernments from Gods, and so be a *Self-seeker*.

The Third Branch of *Self-Love*.

3. It is *Self love* in respect of Parts, or Vertues, or Gifts, or Graces: and this I call Self-pride, or self-pleasing. And for a man that pleaseth himself in himself, he shall not find a more proper mark to to know it by, than by the spirit of envy that is in him; for one evill may try another: And this spirit of envy, is a discovery of self-pleasing. Envy will shew it self, when a man is carryed with envy towards another; to

other

other men of more excellent parts, and graces than his own: Or when a man delights to undervalue other men, in comparison of himself; I say, delights to undervalue them, or can rejoyce in their infirmities, in way of self-exalting; not that the infirmity pleaseth him, but because it makes for his exalting: Now there is self-pleasing.

Now all parts, gifts, graces, excellencies, whatsoever they be; nay faith and the knowledge of *God*: I will tell you, you should not measure them by their habit, or bulk; but by their fruit to *God*. Not by the bulk of parts, how much ye know, and how clearly; but measure them by fruit to *God*. And he that doth so, shall peradventure find, many a lesser Tree, better hung with Fruit, than his own that are greater: And such a man that doth measure parts and graces, by their Fruit to *God*: shall always have cause to go out of himself, and out of them too. And he shall always see little of Christ; and that is the man that hath always most of Christ.

And

And by how much a man hath more of Christ, by so much he hath lesse of self-pleasing, and self-love; for Christ will draw down the price of a mans vertues, and graces, and parts: And till he finds that Christ comes to live in them; and finds what it is to live upon Christ, and Christ to live in him; a man shall never see the Eclipse of his parts and graces, but he will be a self-applauder. But this living of Christ in a mans parts, gifts, graces, duties, vertues, endowments; will take him off from setting up himself, and pleasing himself in them. So *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live* (saith *Paul*) *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*: when he sees Christ lives in him, then he is nothing in self.

Fourthly and lastly, Self-love in respect of our sins and corruptions.

1. In respect of our being free from some corruptions, that we see to be in other men, because we are not so and so bad: And this is self-boasting, or self-conceit, or self-flattery; highly honour

honoring or eſteeming of our ſelves, in our own eyes. We are not ſo bad as others, they may be charged with many corruptions, that we are free from: Like the Phariſee, *Luk.* 18. 11. *I thank thee O Lord that I am not as other men,* no Extortioner, no Adulterer, no Thief, *&c.* This is a falſe meaſure, to meaſure our ſelves by our ſelves, or by other men: As *Paul* ſaith, 2 *Cor.* 11. 12. Not conſidering whether it be Chriſt that hath emptyed us of ſin or no. A man may be free from many ſins, in regard of temper, a very Heathen may: And a boaſting Phariſee may be more filthy within, full of rottenneſs, *Matth.* 23. than a Publican may be without.

2. In regard of our ſins which we are willing to cover, or hide and excuſe, or not abide reproof for: and this is *Self-Indulgence.* When a man treads ſoftly upon the Foot where the Sore is, or is ſelf-indulgent to his corruptions, favourable to his errors: And this is the ſign of it; when the ſame thing that is a beam in another man, is a more

a more in you: and when a man can be very rigid to burn *Tamar* for a Whore, till he ſee the ſtaffe, and braceler, and Signet, and then he is cool. *Gen.* 38.24. A godly man is moſt ſevere againſt himſelf, moſt ſharp and rigid againſt himſelf, more than againſt others; and when he ſees ſin in others, he preſently ſuſpects his own heart. And truly, if the heart of man will not abide ſearching; ſearching the place where the thorn is: your particular paſſions, or luſts, or your miſcarriage towards your Wives or in your Trades, *&c.* If you cannot abide your particular corruptions, to be ſearched, and lanced: But when *Laban* comes to ſearch, then you will ſit down upon your Idolls; your ſins, and corruptions; and you will be hiding and keeping off the blow of the word; then there is ſelf-love, in regard of your ſins.

And here I might tax another ſort, that the better Chriſtians they are, the leſſe they value their infirmities. The more abundant they are in duty, prayer, faſt-

Fasting, Reading, Hearing, &c. The more abundant in Duty, the less Reckoning they make of their Infirmities; whether *Pride*, or *Lust*, or *Passion*, &c. This is a great Fault. What? As if your *Graces* and *Duties* drown'd your *Infirmities* and *Corruptions*; as if your other Walkings made amends for you. I tell you, this takes off from Christ, who should be kept close to you, and fresh to you, by your *Corruptions*. These *Corruptions* that should be Eclipsed by Christ, are made Venial (as it were) by lessening them. This man loseth abundance of Fruit by his *Corruptions*; for they might keep him humble, and drive him out to Christ, to draw in from him, not onely *Righteousness* to cover them, but *healing strength* for *healing*.

And now I come to the *healing* of this *SELF*, the *curing* of this *Self*. By *Self*, I mean this Body that hath so many *Branches*. Of this *Self-sufficiency*, *Self-confidence*, *Self-security*, *Self-acting* of our *Graces*, *Self-purposes* and *Resolutions*, *Self-custody* and *keeping*, and *Self-*

Self-ascribing. And of *Self-love*; *Self-love* in respect of Aims and Ends, *Self-love*, in respect of the Means, *Self love* in respect of our sins, and *Self-love* in respect of our Vertues, Graces, Endowments, and the like. Now I come to the healing of it, and it is a hard Cure.

In the pursuit of which Point, I shall not particularly go to work, so as to apply the Medicine to every Branch; but rather shew you, how it is healed in the Root, or Seat of the Disease.

For so in Bodily Diseases, (as the *Jaundice*) a Physitian doth not apply to every part that is Yellow; but to the Gall, or Liver, where the Root is, the Seat of the Disease lies: So it would be a vain thing to stand to shew you, how it is healed in every Branch: But to shew you, how it is healed in the Root, and so consequently in the Branches.

A principal Ingredient into the healing of Self.

There are Graces, or rather Dispositions of Grace, which are properly on-

oppoſed to *Self*, or all the Branches of *Self* in Us. And they are,

POVERTY of Spirit, and SELF-DENIAL; couple them together, and they are thoſe Graces, which are properly oppoſed to *Self* in Us. Theſe two, in common phraſe, we apprehend but one: But in propriety of Speech,

POVERTY of SPIRIT, is oppoſed to *Self-ſufficiency*; whether ſufficiency of Power, in our ſelves, to get, or walk in Grace: Or ſufficiency of worth, to procure or merit Grace. For he is poor in himſelf, that voluntarily caſts off his own power, in reſpect of doing; and forgoes his own Righteouſneſs, in reſpect of meriting: So that he is unable to get any Grace by his own power, and unworthy to receive any Grace for his own Works; but ſtands in great need, to have power from another, to heal his weakneſs; and Righteouſneſs, to heal his want of Worthineſs. The freeneſs of God, ſupplies the want of worthineſs in us; and GOD hath

hath in himself a greater Motive, why he should be good to you, (his own Freeness) than any Motive that can be in you.

But now *Self-denial*, (especially in the Dialect of Christ) is more properly opposed to *self-love*, and *self-respect*.

What Self-Denial is.

SELF-DENIAL, is properly that, whereby a man in seeking any thing of God, doth not seek himself: & consequently in denying himself, he reserves not any thing from God; not Health, not Liberty, not Life, nor any thing; but makes the keeping and enjoying of all these serviceable to Jesus Christ: And when he cannot be served in the enjoying of them, then he serves Christ by the denial of them, and the renouncing of them: So that both in seeking, and keeping, and losing of them, a man may be a *Self-denier*, that seeks, or keeps, or loseth any thing for Christ. For so a Wife may serve her Husband, as well in wearing her Orna-

ments for his Credit, as in ſpending them for his Relief.

And here I might note a uſual Defect, in handling the Point of *Self-Deniall*, that is, To make the actual renouncing of the things themſelves, (ſuppoſe Health, Riches, Liberty, Life, &c.) to be the Meaſure of our *Self-Denial.*

Now all times do not call us to this, yet all Times and Duties call us to *Self-Deniall*; and ſo a man ſhould not know whether he were a *Self-Denier*, till he come to the Point of actuall renouncing the things themſelves. Now this is rather the deniall of the things, than of Self: And I tell you, a man may renounce the things, be it eaſe, or liberty, or riches, or life, and yet not deny himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1. *Though I give my Body to be burn'd, and have not Charity, I am nothing.* He may part with his Life, I ſay, and yet keep *Self*: For a man may moſt of all ſeek himſelf, in parting with things, or in actuall renouncing of things.

And

And again, a man may deny *Self*, though he never renounce the things: For here is the Rule. He that enjoyes any thing, seeking it, using it serviceably to Jesus Christ, he is a *Self-Denier*: There is it; *Denial* in the use of these things, as well as in the seeking, and actual renouncing of them: And that which is the Reason of seeking, keeping, or losing, is the Service of God. And there is not any man that seeks any thing for a serviceable use, but he can lose it for Service sake. And a man may be a *Self-Denyer*, in the using of a thing for Service, as well in the losing of it.

So then, he that looks to the Service of God, either in keeping or losing; that man may be in both a *Self-denier*. And thus, the *Character*, or *Touch-stone*, of *Self-Denial*, is, the seeking of Health, Ease, Deliverance, Riches, Liberty, Life, &c. for Service to God, and as they are serviceable to him: And actually to lose these things, as their loss is serviceable to God: this is *Self-De-*

nial. Thus Christ put off his own Glory; and again, he did seek his own glory, and did pray for it: Still as it served to his Fathers glory; still as it was usefull to be put off, or taken again, as it was useful to his Fathers glory, *Joh.* 17. the beginning.

Suffer me now briefly, to move you to the seeking of these two, *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Denial:* The one will take you off from *Self-sufficiency*; the other, from *Self-love*, and *Self-seeking*. I say, suffer me to move you to the seeking of these two, and that upon these Motives, and upon these Grounds.

1. These two, *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Denial*, are as it were, the Oyl, in which all the Colours are laid; the Ground, in which God layes and plants all his Graces. They are not so much one peculiar Grace, as the Varnish of all your Graces: They are rather a Complexion, than one particular grace; rather set a Complexion upon all Graces, and Duties, when they are laid in Oyl, that gives them Lasting and Beauty,

ty, when they are laid in *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Denial*.

2. This gives Luſtre, Beauty, Truth, to your Faith, and to your Love of God. *Faith* and *Love*; thoſe two main *Root-Graces*, are both of them as it were laid in *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Deniall*. Theſe are the Woad, that makes the Ground of a laſting Colour. Theſe things, make Grace in you durable, active, glorious, beautiful, and comfortable. Theſe carry a man out of himſelf, and out of his own Worth and Ends.

3. Theſe make a man ſuch a Receiver of Chriſt Jeſus, (as all Grace comes from God) as that ye glorifie him much by the very manner of receiving Chriſt, and Grace from him, when they are received in *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Denial*; for then you will be ſure to uſe them for God, when they are ſo received. In a word,

4. Theſe two make us humble in our Receipts, and ſincere in our returning of Service and Duties to God: And in theſe two, the Life of Religion conſiſts;

sists; that a man may be humble, poor in Spirit, and deny *Self*.

Therefore, as I shew'd you before, out of 2 *Tim.* 3. 1, 2, 3. the Apostle reciting a great *Catalogue* of Sinnes, nameth *Self-love* the first; *Men shall be lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters*, &c. So I may say now, Our Saviour repeating divers *Blessings* and *Beatitudes*, he begins with *Poverty of Spirit*, Mat. 5. 3, 4, 5. &c. *Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek*, &c.

When our Saviour works a Cure, he calls for *Faith*: But when he makes a *Disciple*, he calls for *Self-Denial*, Matth. 16. 24. Would you be healed of disease? then believe: But, would you be a *Disciple* of *Christ*? then deny *Self*. When you are received by *Faith*, then follow *Christ* by *Self-Denial*.

And here I might justly, by occasion of this Point, sleight those Weeds, that are known from Herbs; not by their shape, but smell. I mean, that *Bastard-Profession* of *Christ*, so rife in these days; those

thoſe *Baſtard-Graces* of *Faith* and *Love*; thoſe *Baſtard-Duties* and *Works*, which are not known from Truth by their ſhape: But known by this, that they are begotten out of the *Dung-hill* of *Pride*, and *Self-ſeeking*. They ſavour not of *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Denial*; they are not begotten by this that layes all *Graces* and *Duties* in Oyl; and this that makes them laſting, *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Deniall*.

Motives to ſeek the Conqueſt of Self.

Suffer me as briefly, to move you to ſeek the *Conqueſt of Self*, as to ſeek *Poverty of Spirit*, and *Self-Deniall*. The *Conqueſt of Self*, is the greateſt Victory; To conquer a man's ſelf, in every Prayer, in every Deſire, in every ſorrow for Sin, in every Duty, it is the greateſt Conqueſt: to conquer your ſelves in theſe things, is the greateſt Conqueſt.

For that which almoſt, onely, makes all the Combate, whereby you are inwardly exerciſed in Spirit, and all thoſe painful Combats, whereby your Spirits

are distracted, and torn in pieces while you live here, is the fighting for *Self*, the setting up of this *Self* against God: The Spirit lusts for God, against the Flesh; and the Flesh lusts for *Self*, against the Spirit, *Gal.* 5. 17.

God and *Self*: They, They I say: And here is the Question *Whether God or Self shall reign?* This makes your *Faith* a *Fight*, as the Scripture speakes, 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. *Fight the good Fight of Faith.* And your Love a Labour to you, as 1 *Thes.* 1. 4. It is nothing but *SELF* that makes it so: For *God* and *Self* stands which shall have the first voice; all they stand for, is, which shall have the first place. And truly, *God* hath much ado to win the Field of *Self*, and to become the sole Efficient of Grace and Glory, and to become the last *End* of our Aimes and Intentions: *Self* stands against *God* in both; it would be something in doing, it would have some power or worthiness, and it would have something in the end, *Self-peace*, *self-ease*, *self-credit*, *self-reward*, &c. Therefore

Therefore, *God* hath much ado to win ground of *Self*, and many times *Self* carries it away from *God*; many times in our Preaching, and in your Prayers, and Hearing, and Discoursing, and Alms, &c. It is often, nay, is it not always, that *Self* carryes it away from *God*? For as it is between two that wrestle, he that is under, is counted to have the Fall: So it is in this Combat, between *Self* and *God*; when in your *Desires*, or *Sorrows*, or *Duties*, when *God* is the undermost in them, then he is put to the Foil; then *Self* dishonours him.

Oh, how should it grieve us, That we should make (as we do) this Self of ours to be the chief Generall of our Forces; and God but the Lieutenant under it? Let us labour to shew our selves on Gods side, if ever we look for comfort, and the truth of grace, and to walk easily in grace: then shew your selves on Gods side, in every prayer, in every desire, in every duty, by throwing down this *Jezebel* under his feet.

And there is Reason for it:

1. From the mischief, and hurt that this Self doth you.

2. From the good ye shall get by the killing of it.

1. From the mischief and hurt it doth you:

1. And the first is, It corrupts your Parts and Vertues, though in their kind they be never so eminent; all are corrupted by Self: If ye stamp Self upon them, then ye make them currant for your selves, but not for God; God is excluded out of them. And whersoever men are not temperate, not just, not chaste, for God: when they are not zealous, not couragious, not merciful, not liberall for God: when these Vertues are stampt with Self, this is the Canker of them all.

2. This Self weakens your best abilities, when it gets into them; Though ye have able Parts and Graces too, able Knowledg; I, and other able Accomplishments: It makes you fall, when ye

might

might ſtand; and yield, when ye might withſtand. For, as I ſhewed you out of *Iſa.* 40. 29. *Even the youths ſhall faint, and the young-men ſhall utterly fall.* Out of which words, we may obſerve this Truth, *That Self-ſufficiency is the very bane and break-neck of the beſt Abilities.*

3. It is the loſs of all your Duties, the loſs of all our preaching, as to our ſelves; the loſs of all our profeſſion, the loſs of all our Alms and Works of Mercy. *Hoſea* 10. 1. *Iſrael is an empty Vine, he brings forth fruit to himſelf.* When we bring forth fruit to our ſelves, God calls us *empty Vines*: Empty, (as he) becauſe he brought forth fruit to Self. It is the loſs of all your duties, it makes them fruit to a mans ſelf; you make them ſo: but they are loſs to God, and ſo loſs to you. God owes ſuch a man nothing; you have your reward: It loſeth all your duties.

4. It is the diſcomfort of all that ye could, or might make comfortable to your ſelves. Sometimes you have inward feelings, and taſte ſome drams of joy,

joy, which flaſh now and then into your hearts: If you be all ſelf, thoſe can be but falſe fire and Illuſions; ſome falſe enlightenings of Satan. God never ſealed comforts at any time to *Self-ſeekers*: The Spirit of God never ſeals comforts to a *Self-ſeeker*, in a *Self-ſeeking* action. If you have any comforts at ſuch a time, they are but falſe fire, and lead into further ſeeking of Self, and make you more ſelfiſh than before: It is but a Plot of the Devil, by the light and refreſhings of any flaſh, that he flatheth into the mind: his main plot is, to make you nouriſh Self; and to make you remain within your ſelves, to eſteem and prize your ſelves. But God and his comforts do kill Self in a man. This you may ſee in the ſtony-ground hearers, Self was nouriſhed by the flaſhes of joy they had for a while: for they reſted here, and never attained ſound rooting. And ſo in *Herod*, *he heard John Baptiſt gladly*; but Self retained his unlawfull Luſt ſtill: which ſhewed this Joy was of the Devil. And ſo in others.

5. It

5. It makes you unequall and uneaven in all your wayes. For a man that is led by Self, with a great deal of zeal, those wayes that ly in his bias, as the bias of Self is set, that way he will go with a great deal of zeal: But this man will be unequall; For when God might be honoured another way, to which the bias of Self stands not so much; therein he is nothing.

If then this *Self* Corrupt your Parts, Weaken your Abilities, Be the loss of your Duties, The discomfort of all your Comforts, And make you walk uneavenly in all your wayes: What reason is it then, but ye should seek the killing of it, above all your seekings?

2. Ye may be moved hereto, by the good ye shall get by the killing of this *Self*: by the mortifying of this, shall I call it earthly member? No: But rather the earthy Soul, that flowes into every earthly member, and makes every member Earthly. This is the soul of the body of sin that dwells in you, that hath so many members, *Rom.*7,24.

1. The good ye ſhall get by the conqueſt of this *Self*, is this; That the abating of *Self* in the root but one degree, would work a world of good in the whole man, in your whole lives, and whole courſes: the abating of Self but one degree in the root would do it, many degrees of good in the whole man, in all your walkings and converſation. If a man could make the ſpring to fall but a foot, it may be the ſtream might fall a yard: ſo a little Self plucked down, cauſeth a wonderful operation. A little Self-denial, cauſeth a wonderful change in all the affections; It changes a mans ſorrow for ſin; It changes his deſires for God; It changes his prayers; It changes his Preaching; All his wayes are changed: an Inch abating here, is an Ell in your lives. This you may ſee in *Peter*, when he was taken off of his own ſtrength and confidence, how he ſtands for Chriſt, and perſeveres alwayes after.

2. God will not be ſuch a ſtranger to you; If you will get this enemy of his

his (that ſtands in competition with him for the firſt place) out; God will not be ſuch a ſtranger. It may be you hear, and do, and God keeps aloof off; he doth not ſupply you by it, as you would have him: Truly, when God hath ſomething in you, he will do more for you; If the room were his, he would furniſh it: Our Saviour gave the odd talent to him that had ten already. *Matth.* 25. 28. Why, it was ſtrange; *Maſter he hath ten*: I, all's one for that; he hath traded, and gotten five more, give him that alſo. When God hath ſomething in you, then you ſhall have more: For, *To him that hath, ſhall be given.* Hath; What's that? Why him that hath, as he that had the ten talents; that is, hath the uſefulneſs of them for God; he ſhall have more given. That which was taken from others, was given to him: Others that neglect the uſe of their gifts, and graces, and parts for God, and ſeek themſelves, ſhall be ſtript: and that which is taken from them, ſhall be given to you, and God will give you abun-

abundance. It is a wonder to ſee the Improvement of ſuch Chriſtians, both in gifts and graces, that deny themſelves, and make God their end. Others are ſtackt, and loſe ground; their odd talent is taken away: Theſe increaſe, and come on. And why? When you put Gods ſtock forward, he will truſt you with more.

3. When you have conquered your ſelves, you ſhall have the purer joyes, and comforts, and ſolace. Why? Becauſe every ſuch duty wherein a man hath exalted God, every ſuch duty carries a ſeal in its hand, to ſeal you to be Gods, and God to be yours. So that by every ſuch ſervice, you ſhall be able to clear your title, and ſtate: by every holy action, and exerciſe of Grace, which is exerciſed for God; a man ſhall be able to clear his title, and ſtate for God. It is a great thing. Every one will be a ſign for you; ye need not go about to beat it out by arguments: The Duties will tell you by way of teſtimony, and reward, that you are Gods,

and

and God yours. When God is ſought in duty, and not Self, there is no comfort ſo pure nor ſo clear: For the Devill cannot ſteal Gods Seal from him, nor ſet Gods Seal to it; cannot give ſuch comforts as rewards of ſincere ſeeking God.

I confeſſe, the Devil may interpoſe at ſuch a time, for the corrupting of ſuch comforts, or joyes: either to puff up, or to make ſecure; That he doth. For ſo though Sathan carried not *Paul* into the *third Heavens*, 1 *Cor.* 12. yet he might blow him up with Pride thereby, and ſo corrupt thoſe high things. So Sathan may labour to corrupt your comforts, but he cannot ſeal: never ſeals (by any flaſh of comfort) thoſe pure actions, wherein God hath been purely exalted, and Self excluded.

4. The Fourth Benefit is this; You ſhall have a ſure mark of truth, and meaſure of your love to God; by the getting of *Self* down: For ſo much love of God is in you, as it riſeth above Self-

Self-love; Juſt ſo much, and no more. No man can be reckoned to have any jot, or degree of the love of God in him; but ſo much as that love riſeth above Self-love. And let the love of God in you, ſeem to your ſelves to be never ſo great; yet it is not one jot, till it be riſen (at leaſt) ſomething above Self-love. Therefore as he did not ſay amiſs, that ſaid; In meaſuring the degrees of his Faith, he would not look to the degrees of aſſent, or perſwaſion, how firm an aſſent his heart did give; But to the degrees of conqueſt, of carnal reaſonings, to the point of conqueſt: For ſo much Faith a man hath in Chriſt; ſo much as it gets conqueſt over his fears, preſumptions, luſts, reaſonings, &c.

So in meaſuring of the Love of God; It is not looking to the heat of this love in you, in it ſelf; nor as it may ſeem to put forth it ſelf, in an action of zeal: But when ye meaſure Gods love in your ſelves, let this be the Com-

paſs;

paſs; Look to that point of the love of God in you, exceeding Self-love. And by how much that love cryes down, and ſubdues ſelf-love in you; by ſo much ye love God: And till ye come to this pitch, there is no love of God in you at all.

For theſe two, *God* and *Self*, are like the two Poles of the World, ſo much as ye lay the one Pole in Travail, ſo much ye raiſe the other: and ſo much as ye lay down *ſelf-love* in your Travails towards *Heaven*, ſo much you raiſe the love of *God* in you, and no more.

If *God* have but one Grain above *Self* in any man, then *God* hath ſomething: And *God* hath no more in any man, than he doth overtop *Self*; ſo much, and no more. Alas, there are thouſands of you, if you would meaſure the *Love of God* in you by this meaſure, *you* would be found, not to have one jot of the *Love of God* in You. Why? Becauſe ye perform *Duties*, and ſeem to love *God*, but *ſelf* carryes it away: And

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ye perform *Duties* for *ſelf*, and ſo it carryes it away.

And ſo much for this Point, that concerns the Motives of men; and this doth but ſhew you, your concernments.

There is a World of outward ſins, that the World cries ſhame to, and beats them out of mens faces: But here lies the Life of Religion, and the power of Godlineſs, and Reign of Chriſt in you; when this inward ſin of *Self* comes to be beaten to pieces.

I will begin therefore to ſhew the Cure; in handling of which, I will premiſe two things which are in the way.

1. That *God* doth break *Self* a pieces, at a man's firſt *Converſion*, in ſome meaſure, if he be ever truly converted: I make no queſtion, in ſome more, in ſome leſs. But this is a truth, the more that *Self* is broken, at a man's firſt bringing in, the better room hath God in the heart ever after. Therefore, they that come into Grace, or a ſtate of Grace, with *ſelf* leſs broken, they have the greater Combats and Troubles, all their

their days. God layes a constant Humiliation, in their first Humiliation many times. And thus he works many times; I will but run over things.

1. The first thing that riseth in a man, peradventure, in Humiliation, is sin-loathing, he begins to see his filthy courses; and when God humbles a man, the first thing in his Eye is Sin-loathing: But now sin-loathing may be without self-loathing; sin loathing may be with great self-seeking, though not with great self-liking.

Now the Heart broken in pieces with misery, is yet self-whole. How so? Because Self remains in it; therefore God followes it home from point to point, till Self be broken to pieces: And till now, we shall never turn to God, nor walk with God.

Well then, when sinne terrifies the Conscience, then a man runs to his Refuges of Self-worthiness, and begins to cast about why God should shew mercy to him: why may not God be good

to

to him, he hath not been thus and thus bad; no *Drunkard*, no *Swearer*, no *Railer*, no *Fornicator*, no *Persecutor* of the People of God, &c. Now when the Heart starts hither, it flies to Self-worth, or Self-Righteousness.

Now hither God follows him, scatters all his Confidences, and makes the Citizen to which he flies, that he shall not be able to give him a husk, not one bit of Bread here: yea, he makes the Righteousness of this man, as loathsom as his sins, to make him say, *Sure this will not do*; and so he comes out of his Righteousness.

And when a man sees this, then he flyes from this; then he flyes to his own power: *If it please God, I will walk a new course, I will undertake for Christ*: And this is *Self* still.

Well; The Lord lets him undertake, and withall lets him fall into a World of Relapses: by that time he is gone one Round or two of the Ladder, drops down again, till the Lord hath brought him

him to lye down, and fear to uſe his own power; and to ſay, and ſee too, that he cannot believe; *I cannot believe.* And, in one word, when the Lord, in this way of humbling you, and ſearching you out of your ſelves, as well as out of your ſins; when he makes you able to relate ſin, and refer the ſight of it onely to puniſhment, that ye can relate it to miſery: Then God by diſcovery of himſelf to the Soul, or by the ſufferings of Chriſt, or his long-ſuffering, makes you ſee further, and makes you able to relate it further than ſorrow, that is, as it is unkindneſs to God, and as it is againſt him.

And when a man can relate ſin further than to puniſhment, I believe that man can relate Grace further than to benefit, the benefit of himſelf; even ſo far as to God, and the uſe and ſervice of God.

For while a man can carry ſinne no further than to *Hell*, I will never believe that man can carry the deſire of any Grace,

Grace, any further than to *Heaven*, or benefit: But when once God hath made thee able to carry sin further than punishment; namely, That thou art able to see and feel thy sins for GOD, then thou shalt be able to carry thy Graces further than thy Benefit.

Thus when God hath cast out Self-worth, and Self-power, and Self-ends, in flying from sin, or desire of any Grace, or Christ; now Self is broken: And till ye come thus far, Self is whole; the very Head of it, and the very Heart of it; till ye can carry sin further than punishment, and grace further than benefit.

Being thus broken at first; What then? Is it healed? No: Why? Because when Self is thus broken, yet (it is like a Serpent cut in pieces) it will knit again: You may see it in *Jonah*, he fled from God, in way of Self-seeking; he would not go to *Nineveh* to be shamed, to Prophesie Destruction; and then God might spare them, and he should

ſhould be counted a Falſe Prophet. But God brought him in miraculouſly, and brought him through a Whale, and made him cry and pule there: One would have thought all Self had been broken, and he goes to *Ninive*, and delivers his Meſſage. But you ſee how Self knit again, and how angry he is, *Jonah* 4.2. *O Lord, was not this my ſaying, when I was in mine own Countrey?* &c.

So it is in us; For as in the time of unregeneracy, Self lived upon thy ſins; So now thou art regenerate, it will ſerve it ſelf upon thy graces, and duties: therefore God muſt heal it, or elſe you will be overgrown with it.

The ſecond thing premiſed.

Secondly, The healing of ſelf is much advanced by the reflexibleneſs and looking back of the heart into it ſelf: when God gives ſelf-reflexibleneſs into the heart of man, to make him ſee how the ſpring moves, and by what wheel the heart moves. But for ſuch as have out-looking hearts, look to duties and performances, and the like; you

shall find these men miserably overgrown with Self; and they know it not, or at least never spy it, nor see it. They do not ask, How do I this duty, or that duty? but onely look to do it.

Now this reflexibleness of heart upon our selves in duties, prevents a world of mischief: as watching a thief, prevents a thief; And if you have not hearts of this temper, self-love must needs abound.

There is no greater sign of a world of weeds in a Garden, then that no body ever looks into it. And there is no greater sign of self-love, and self-ends, and self-respects, then to be of this temper, not to look into your selves: For these tares will grow of themselves, like weeds. And though you grow (as you conceive) in duties, and zeal, and performances: yet ye grow not; for your spirits grow not in God and Christ, nor fulness in Christ, nor experience in Christ; And ye are all of a Leprosie within, by abundance of self. The *heart* being thus set, *Christ* cures

self

ſelf in his people, by ſuch things as theſe.

The firſt Cure of ſelf by defeating you.

1. By defeating of us, when we ſeek or act by our own power, God doth defeat his People, when he would kill Self, when they ſeek or act by their own Power, and for their own ends: he defeats them of ſucceſs, and takes off the Charret wheels, layes them in the duſt. For as the withdrawing the fewel puts out the fire; ſo doth God defeat their purpoſes, by withdrawing his help. *Iſa.* 40. 29. *Even the Youths ſhall faint, and the young men ſhall utterly fall.*

Now God defeats two wayes:

1. By withdrawing thoſe things from them which they ſeek, denies them thoſe very graces, or the meaſure of them; that peace, that they ſeek for themſelves; And he denies for this end, that they may examine the Reaſon of thrice being denyed: For when we pray there with *Paul*, and the buffet is not removed, then it is good to examine

the reason of our denyall. And upon examination ye shall find, that there is some self, either in acting of your Graces, or in seeking that ye seek. As suppose, a man prepare himself for an Ordinance, the Word, the Supper, or any other Ordinance: Now it is the Lord that teacheth to profit. *Isa.* 48. 17. Now while he prepares himself by his abilities, and looks not to that promise, *I am the Lord that teaches thee to profit*; he falls short of that fitness that God requires, or he desires. So while a man fits himself to answer, studies to answer, it is not unlawful: But if he look not to that promise, *Matth.* 10. 19. *I will give you a mouth and words what to say*; while he looks to his abilities, he falls short, and God makes him a fool; And this God doth to make him look into the Reason.

2. God defeats Self, not by denying you, but giving you the things that ye seek, with a care in them. He gives the thing, and takes not away the temptation of the thing.

It is happy when God gives men parts and gifts without temptation. God many times in this case, gives a man a knife to cut his fingers, to teach him to be content next time: many times we find not content, nor comfort, in the things we have sought, and received. What's the Reason? It is great like the *Quails* the *Israelites* had, they had them with surfeit. *Numb.* 11. 20. So many times God gives gifts and parts, and other things also, to be like a knife, to cut a mans fingers: and gives no comfort with them at all.

The second cure of Self, by manifesting Love to you.

2. The Lord cures Self, by manifesting Love to us, in his gifts and graces bestowed upon us. The Scripture makes a clear distinction, between the gifts of God, and the Love of God in them: and carries our hearts up, to see Gods love, in the pardon of sin, in Justification, in Sanctification, *&c.* And properly it is not benefits that kindles pure Love; there is Love kind-

led by them: but Love kindles pure Love. The pure Love of God, kindles pure love in us. *Who loved me, and gave himself for me*, saith *Paul. Gal.* 2. 20. When a man sees God hath a particular love to him, and therefore gives benefits as pledges of his Love. Then we love him because he *Loved* us first; not because he gave us these and these benefits.

As a man that layes sticks to sticks that have fire on them, he blowes at the end where the fire is, to kindle them, and make them flame. So it is with benefits and Love; the benefits shew love; but if you would blow up your hearts in true affection to God, you must look to that end of the Benefits where love is: and look to the heighth and depth and length, and breadth of the Love of God; And then that love will constrain you, and cast out Self.

The third Cure of Self, by the super-excellency of his Communion.

3. The Lord cures SELF, by making himself in Communion and fellow-

lowſhip, more worth than all rewards: If we can ſee that we have God, and Covenant-Communion with God; God is more worth than all rewards. Graces are meanes of Communion with God; And it is true, the end of a thing is better than all meanes; and our Communion with God and Chriſt, is the end of all our Graces.

Now the way to overthrow ſelf is this; If God make his graces and gifts ſweet to you, ſo far as he is exalted: ſo that ye uſe them onely to keep fellowſhip with God, and that's the ſweeteſt part of them: this overthrows Self. A man may deſire Graces, and do duties, for Ornament: But if you deſire the one, and do the other, for Communion with God; it is the ſweeteſt part of them.

The fourth Cure, by making benefits practicall.

4. God kills Self, by making the aſſurance of the Pardon of ſin, and the

assurance of Justification, and Adoption; to be serviceable things, to be of use to Sanctification, for the oyling of the wheels of our obedience. These are Benefits, and may so be sought: But they are the most practical things that may be. 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having these PROMISES, let us cleanse our selves of all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit: perfecting holiness in the fear of God. And having such precious promises, whereby we are partakers of the Divine nature.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. Hence the fire is kindled, if it be gone out, by looking upon these Gospel-benefits; but let them be practicall: Let fear rise, because of the forgiveness of sin; *There is mercy with the Lord* (to pardon sin) *that he may be feared. Psal.* 130 *ult.* Let your Graces be enlarged, strengthned, comforted by these Gospel-benefits; these do much quicken the heart: And if they be so used, it will overthrow Self. For a man may seek Self, in seeking the beneficiall part of these: but seek the serviceable part of them.

The fifth Cure, is the manifesting of his Grace.

5. Self is cured, when God manifests the freeness of his Power, and freeness of his Grace to his Children: And this God doth in many particular acts. Though they have the habits of Grace, God manifests a great Power in his People, in managing that they have. The Apostle prayeth for the *Ephesians*, Chap. 1 19. *That they might feel the exceeding greatness of Gods mighty power*; such as he put forth in raising Christ from the dead: not onely to make them believe at the first, but to carry them through; to keep them by his Power, and so to manifest the freeness of his Grace still. And it is pity, the having of Grace should eclipse the freeness of it. If Self were beaten down, it would make God's Power seen, in carrying us through the Wilderness, as well as in delivering us from *Egypt*: If self-worthiness, and self-power, were abated,

abated, and kept down. And the manifestation of the freeneſs of God's Power and Grace, is an excellent meanes to beat and keep Self down: For the more we feel and ſee the freeneſs of Gods Grace, the leſſe we value our own worth. And the more we experience the freen-ſs of Gods Power, the leſſe we value our own ſtrength. The Lord grant all his poor People, that they may conquer and ſubdue Self; that God alone may be glorified, and exalted. *Amen.*

FINIS.